

TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

BIBLICAL MAN'S ENCOUNTER WITH GOD: PRAYER ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

PRAYER IN THE TRADITIONS OF THE PENTATEUCH

— *Joseph Kottackal*

PRAYER IN THE PROPHETS

— *L. Legrand*

PSALMS AS A SCHOOL OF PRAYER

— *C. M. Cherian*

IMPRECATIONS IN THE PSALMS: THEIR POSITIVE VALUE

— *K. Luke*

PRAYER IN THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS

— *Mathew Vellanickal*

PRAYER IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

— *Thomas Jacob*

BULLETIN: THE TERM PRĀRTHANA: ITS MEANING

— *K. Luke*

BOOK REVIEWS

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	99
Prayer in the Traditions of the Pentateuch <i>Joseph Kottackal</i>	101
Prayer in the Prophets <i>L. Legrand</i>	109
The Psalms as a School of Prayer <i>C. M. Cherian</i>	119
Imprecations in the Psalms: their Positive Value <i>K. Luke</i>	132
Prayer in the Life and Teaching of Jesus <i>Mathew Vellanickal</i>	149
Prayer in the Primitive Church <i>Thomas Jacob</i>	170
The Term Prārthana: Its Meaning <i>K. Luke</i>	181
Book Reviews	197

JEEVADHARA

— A Journal of Christian Interpretation —

To the Notice of Readers & Subscribers:-

1. Jeevadhara is a bi-monthly in two editions, English and Malayalam. The two editions are published alternately every month.
2. The Editorial Board does not necessarily endorse the individual views of contributors.
3. Subscriptions are payable in advance and must be sent to:-
The Manager, Jeevadhara, Post Bag No. 6, Alleppey, Kerala, India.
Inland subscriptions are best sent by M. O.
4. Exchanges, books for reviews, and queries should be addressed to:-
The General Editor, Jeevadhara, Post Bag No. 6, Alleppey, Kerala, India.
But articles for publication may be sent to the respective Section Editors.

Subscription Rates:-

Indian:	Rs	12/-	(Malayalam)
	Rs	15/-	(English)
Foreign:	\$	6/-	(U. S. A.)
			or its equivalent abroad.

N. B. Air surcharge, if required, will be extra.

The Word of God

BIBLICAL MAN'S ENCOUNTER WITH GOD:
PRAYER ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

Editor :

K. Luke

Theology Centre,
Alleppey,
Kerala, India.

JEEVADHARA

GENERAL EDITOR

Constantine Manalel

LITERARY EDITOR

C. A. Sheppard

SECTION EDITORS

The Problem of Man :

The Word of God :

The Living Christ :

The People of God :

The Meeting of Religions :

The Fullness of Man :

K. Luke

Samuel Rayan

Xavier Koodapuzha

John B. Chethimattam

Joseph Thayil

SECTIONAL BOARD OF EDITORS

Mathew Vellanickal

C. M. Cherian

George Mangatt

J. M. Pathrapankal

Editorial

Prayer is essentially man's encounter with God. We all know that biblical man had his encounters with God in prayer, encounters that ever served as the mainspring of his religious life. In this issue of *Jeevadhara* an endeavour is made to study and analyse biblical man's life of prayer with a view to making his experience relevant and meaningful to modern man.

Joseph Kottackal surveys the traditions of the Pentateuch which, on several occasions, refers to prayer, and which will, therefore, give us some idea of the concept of prayer in various circles in ancient Israel. We know that the prophets, in addition to being men who led a life of intimate fellowship with God, had their own ideas about genuine prayers, and their thought is synthesized by L. Legrand. C. M. Cherian discusses the value of the psalms as prayer; his contribution will help the readers to fulfil the injunction *psallite sapienter*. The section editor's essay too is meant to further the understanding of the psalms. Mathew Vellanickal studies our Lord's teaching on prayer as well as the part it played in his life; His Prayer is in fact the prototype of all genuine Christian prayer. Thomas Jacob surveys the idea of prayer in the Epistles, *Acts* and *Revelation*.

The last essay is an Indological contribution whose purpose is to make the ordinary reader acquainted with the tools and techniques of the professional Indologist and the Indo-Europeanist as well as with the world of ideas of the first Veda. The book-review section lists some titles which, though highly technical in nature and destined primarily for the specialist, will nevertheless be of interest to all those who teach Indology in our seminaries. In point of fact, no member of the Church in India can claim competence in Indology unless he is acquainted with the works of the great masters.

The contributors are aware of the limitations and imperfections of their papers. We have, at our disposal, in India, only a very tiny fraction of scholarly publications, with the result that it is well-nigh impossible to be up-to-date! Yet something is better than nothing.

The section editor as well as the general editor wishes to thank the contributors for their kindness and co-operation, without which the publication of this issue would not have been possible.

Calvary College
Trichur-4

K. Luke

Prayer in the Traditions of the Pentateuch

The history of prayer in Israel is undoubtedly the history of Israel's religion in general. Prayer developed in Israel with the unfolding of the religion of revelation. We cannot hope to press this study back to the origins of her prayer. Even the older written sources, which we think we have in the OT, present us with a life and type of prayer which are by no means primitive.¹

Our main source of prayer in Israel is naturally the Psalter. It is the large collection of mainly liturgical texts, which was accumulated by a careful process of selection and edition over perhaps six centuries. The process may have taken place in connection with the sacrificial worship in the temple of Jerusalem.²

If we consider the narrative sections of the Pentateuch, we see that here, as in the later historical works, the author was not concerned with adorning his accounts of events with prayers. There are not very many express references to the various characters who pray. There is no reference at all to anyone praying in the Joseph story; nor is there prayer in such characteristic passages of Genesis as 21,22,28,32:25-33. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly true that prayer is often assumed without being mentioned (cf. Gen. 30,6,17,22).

Julius Wellhausen, in his *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, has attempted to provide the essential basis for the inner link in the development according to the successive cultic strata in the Pentateuch.

1. K. Herrmann, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II, p. 790

2. R. A. F. Mackenzie, S. J., *Faith and History of the O. T.* (Minneapolis, 1965) p. 92

The first stage is traced from the Yahwistic-Elohistic festival calendars (JE). They are mainly concerned with agriculture and harvesting. The second stage is represented by the Deuteronomic calendar (D). It attempts to give a 'historical dress' to the religion and worship. The Priestly calendar (P) represents the third and final stage. Here we find the festivals dated according to the days of the month. It has, moreover, introduced new festivals which, far from being rooted in nature, reflect the religious aims of the priestly author.³

Individual Prayer

Cultic worship in Israel is essentially a social phenomenon. Even when an individual offers such worship he does so in accordance with fixed rules, as far as possible in fixed places, and generally at fixed times. In the strict sense cult cannot exist without ritual.⁴ Hence there is little place for the individual to become shut up in himself and to achieve a private and isolated relationship between God and his soul. God's action is directed towards the community. The individual is directly related to the community. Therefore the intense relationship of the individual life to God does not lead to ascetic forms of life which separate the religious man from the community.⁵

Nevertheless, as the expression of one's inner spirit, prayer is a very personal act. Man acknowledges God as his Creator and supreme Lord. He praises the divine power manifested in creation and in the providential care of the world. Yahweh is enthroned on the hymns of praise of Israel.⁶ Man is grateful to God for the blessings conferred upon him, begs forgiveness of his sins and assistance in time of trouble.⁷ The predominant

3. Cf. H. J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel* (Virginia, 1966), pp. 4 f.

4. R. de Vaux O. P., *Ancient Israel* (London, 1961), p. 271

5. W. Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (London, 1966), p. 37

6. J. Pedersen, *Israel* (London, 1969), Vol. I, p. 235

7. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* (London, 1965), pp. 99-123

theme is, however, God's providence. As examples of individuals at prayer we may recall Eve, the patriarchs, Agar (Gen. 16:11), Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:12) Lea, Rachel (Gen. 30:1), Moses, Anna (1 Sm. 1:9) Elias and so on.

Moses is always presented as a great man of prayer, one who intercedes, whether in requested prayer for Pharaoh (Ex. 8:25; 29:29,33;10:8) or in requested or unrequested intercession for Israel (Ex. 32:11-14,31f; 34:8-9; Nb. 14:13-19! Cf. Dt. 9:26-29). He intercedes for his people even to the point of offering up himself as their representative.

In ordinary prayer-life petition occupies the foremost place. Usually the one who prays supplicates deliverance from earthly affliction. Pious persons ask for children (Gen. 15:3; 4:60;25:21), good crops etc (Gen. 27:28;49:25). Petitions for spiritual blessings are not totally absent from the prayers. Moses asks to be enlightened about God's designs in the work of salvation (Ex:33:13) and to behold his glory (Ex. 33:18). Petitionary prayers are sometimes accompanied by tears, fasting and signs of grief (Ex. 33:4; Dt. 1:45; 1 S. 7:6). At times vows are made (Gen. 28:20; 1 S. 1.11) or there is a sorrowful acknowledgement of having sinned (Ex. 32.31; Nb. 14:19; 1 S. 7:6).

God inclines His ear to the prayers of none but those who lead a good moral life. Thus Judith was urged to intercede for the people because she was a God-fearing woman (Jud. 8:31). On the other hand one who has strayed from the paths of virtue was not to expect that what he prayed for would be granted from on High. This is why Moses told the disobedient Israelites: "You weep before Yahweh, but Yahweh does not listen to you or take notice of of you" (Dt. 1:45).⁸ With these facts in mind let us now examine the nature of prayer in the Pentateuchal Traditions.

8. Cf. P. Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minnesota, 1955), pp. 237-243

God Speaks to Man (JE)

The fundamentals of prayer are found in meetings with God, often depicted as conversations.⁹ Man may respond to the meeting by erecting a shrine (Gen. 12:7;13:18), by obedience (Gen. 12:1-4a;13:14-18) or verbally by a question or a request (Gen. 15:2,8;18:23 etc.).

Theophanies may involve an unrecognized visitor (Gen. 18:2) or, particularly in E, a dream (Gen. 20:3,6;28:12-16). This is to make conversation possible and to restrain man from looking upon God directly.¹⁰

Elohim is a God who is moved by prayer whether it is verbal or not. In E God responds to the weeping of a child as though it were a prayer (Gen. 21:16-17). J also describes prayer as 'speaking in the heart', and so, inaudible to others (Gen. 24:12-14). In JE prayer is quite natural and a two way intercourse. It was only in a later concept that God became dreadful, remote and highly exalted.¹¹ Recollection of past acts of divine mercy as a basis for prayer already appears in JE (Gen. 32:9-12; Ex. 32:13).¹²

In all these respects Israelite prayers are distinguished from those of the Canaanites, the Arameans, the Babylonians and the rest. All of them sought divine aid against life's afflictions and divine blessings on their activities. But the arguments by which they attempted to move God were different.

The Places where God Speaks

To eliminate external distractions, which very easily destroy recollections during prayer, the pious man withdraws from noise,

9. Cf. J. Gen. 3:8-19;4:9-15;15:1-16;18:2-5; Ex. 3:1-12; E:Gen. 20:3,6;28-12-16, etc.

10. Cf. Gen. 2:21;15:12; Ex. 33:18-23

11. Cf. C. W. F. Smith, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III, p. 858.

12. This element was to be notably developed in D

preferably, to the roof or to upper chambers (Jud. 8:5; Job. 3:11; Dan. 6:11). Elevated places are considered excellent spots for prayer because one gets the feeling of being closer to God (1 S. 1:9; 1 K. 18:42). A sanctuary where God manifested himself, is always well adapted to further devotion (1 S. 1:9; 9:12; 1 K. 8:29 f.; 2 K. 19:14 f.).

J describes a tent as a fixed place of prayer where God speaks to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Ex. 33:7-11). The decisive point in J is representation of the patriarchs as cult-founders and as persons who took no definite step in their lives without cultic acts (Gen. 12:7f; 13:4, 18; 15:7 f.; 26:25). Sanctuaries were erected on the routes along which they travelled. There was scarcely any important centre where they lived that was not marked by an altar.¹³

This is also the dominant view of the Elohist Tradition (Gen. 33:18-20). The tent of meeting, according to JE, was a place where Israelites who wanted an oracle could get it. This indicates that the tent was a movable sanctuary which they carried about with them together with the ark. For they could not do without a cult-place and an oracle-place.¹⁴ The picture which the P tradition gives of the tent (Ex. 36:40) is a late idealization.

Prayer as Recollection (D)

D emphasizes the necessity of recollecting God's mighty acts. The memory of them is to be stored in the heart to prompt proper prayer (Dt. 4:9, 32-39; 7:18-19; 8:2 etc.). Moses's own prayers start with a recollection; or anamnesis, which asserts God's previous mercies (Dt. 9:25-29; Cf. 26:5-11).

Prayer is always within the covenant between God and the people (Dt. 4:23). God is conceived of as terrible and demanding and as having always been most powerful. He has acted mightily.

13. R. J. Thompson, *Penitence and Sacrifice in Early Israel outside the Levitical Law* (Leiden, 1963), p. 53

14. Cf. A. S. Kapelrud, "The Role of Cult in Israel", *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* (New York, 1965), p. 46 f.

He must neither be challenged nor put to the test (Dt. 6:16; cf. Mt. 4:7).¹⁵ Israel has to be a holy people (Dt. 7:6; cf. I Pet 2:9). Biblical prayer cannot be discussed apart from this covenanted relationship. Israel is convinced that Yahweh's honour compels Him to uphold Israel and humble her enemies.

The religious attitude and policy set forth in the Pentateuch are given more importance than the historical element. According to it, ceremonial acts and material aids do not matter as much as the feeling that God is near to us. (Dt. 4:4,12,15-19). At any rate there is a basic interest for the Deuteronomist in the central sanctuary. The temple at Jerusalem is increasingly realised to be the place where Yahweh dwells (Dt. 12:1-14). It finally becomes the "house of prayer for all people" (Is. 56:7).

The Deuteronomic Tradition in other Historical Books

The D thesis in Judges is that God exposed Israel to her enemies and sent her deliverers when she cried to him (Jud. 3:7-9;10:10-16)¹⁶. At the beginning of *Samuel* there is the pious Hannah (I S. 1:10f) who pours out her heart before God in quiet inaudible prayer. Solomon's humble prayer at Gibeon is rewarded with more than he had asked for. His petition comes after a recollection (I K. 3:3-14). Similarly there is his prayer of dedication (I K. 8:23-53) which seems to be greatly expanded from its original form.

In spite of God's awe inspiring omnipresence he can be called on to hear the prayers made in or towards a shrine (I K. 8:30-39). The response expected embodies the typical D doctrine of reward and punishment. But it is recognized that the state of the heart is of interest to God. His power of making men whole, physically as well as spiritually, is assumed. The association of prayer and penitence is a permanent insight.¹⁷

15. This however is not a rubric against seeking a sign as Gideon did (Jud. 6:17-22,36-40)

16. Cf. also, the short and powerful prayers of Gideon (Jud. 6:36-40), Manoah (13:8), Samson (15:18;16:28).

17. Cf. P. Heinisch, *op. cit.*, p. 238

Elijah retires to the mountain to consult God, and his commemoration of the God of the Fathers prevails over the pagan demonstrations of his opponents (I K. 18:26-29,36-39;19). Hezekiah's prayer to the Creator and the God of all the nations, superior to idols, begins with a long exordium followed by a brief petition (2 K. 19:14-19).

The proportion in which approach to petition occurs, and the grounding of prayer in a recollection of God's nature, are essentially biblical, and contain the seed of the New Testament teaching and of the liturgical practice.

The Development of Liturgical Prayer (P)

The laws of worship and prayer were definitely fixed by the priests. In the patriarchal era the chief of the tribe was also its priest (Gen. 11:31-13:18;15). This priesthood of the chiefs was prolonged into the time when the kings of Jerusalem, beginning with David, exercised certain ritual functions (2 S. 5:6-9; 6; Ps. 24:7-10; 1 K. 9: 1-11,13). However, from the time of Moses onwards, the tribe of Levi had specialized in the service of the sanctuaries.¹⁸

In the P redaction of the Pentateuch, holiness and seclusion are emphasized. The absolute God must be approached with meticulous attention unlike the Yahweh of J or the Elohim of E. Only God's voice is heard. Furthermore there is a concern to tie up religious observances with historic events (Ex. 12). Emphasis is upon offerings and sacrifices, which in themselves become a dramatic form of Prayer. Prayer falls within the setting of observance of the Sabbath as the climax of creation (Gen. 1:1-2:4a) and of reverence for the sanctuary. A disciplined framework of life assures the people of the divine presence in them (Lev. 22:31-33).

In spite of their insistence on the cult, personal prayer is not ignored by the P editors (cf. Neh. 1:4-11). In the fifth-century prayers scriptural language becomes prominent as interest in

18. P. Grelog, *Introduction to the Bible* (London, 1967),

liturgical propriety grows. The use of the response 'Amen' appears at this time. (Neh. 5:13;8:6; cf. Nb. 5:22; 1 Chr. 16:36). So also; the practice of praying before reading the Law (Neh. 8:6). The repetition of formal phrases in P is appropriate in a liturgical setting; it is a mark of the best liturgical prayer at all times.

Conclusion

Prayer was always highly esteemed in Israel. A sinner who failed to obtain forgiveness by sacrifices could become reconciled with God through prayer or through the intercession of an upright man. From the very beginning prayer had its place alongside of sacrifice, for sacrifice and prayer are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Even the very expression "to call upon the name of Yahweh" simply refers to prayer made at places of sacrifice (Gen. 4:26;12:8;13:4;21:33;26:25).

In Israel's practice of worship the Church has seen the shadow and outline of the final saving, redemptive work accomplished by Jesus Christ.

St Thomas Ap. Seminary
Kottayam- 10

Joseph Kottackal

Prayer in the Prophets

It is not within the scope of this paper to set forth what the prophets of the Old Testament have said about prayer. This has been done many times in the context of the oft-resumed debate on their attitude towards the cult. Neither shall we attempt to find out how far they were actually men of prayer and of contemplation. A man like Jeremiah could certainly figure in a history of spirituality. Our quest will bear less on the subjectivity of the prophets than on their office. The question here is not, 'How did the prophets pray?' but 'What was the role of prayer in the framework of their prophetic mission?'

J. Mackenzie says that "Prayer is extremely common in prophetic literature"¹. On the other hand, according to J. Skinner, "How far the older prophets (i. e. anterior to Jeremiah) were men of prayer is a question which we have slight means of answering"². To a large extent, the answer depends on what is meant by prayer. If the definition is stretched to cover any form of contact with God, it may be said that the prophetic literature in its entirety is prayer. But if prayer is taken in its usual sense of a movement of man's soul towards God it may be said that the mission of the prophets was to deliver God's words to men rather than to mediate between God and men's entreaties to Him. In the latter sense, prayer seems to be more a priestly than a prophetic activity. As for the prophet, the basic form of his language is the messenger's formula³. He voices the command of the Lord: "Thus says the Lord Yahweh...". When the prophet borrows the priestly language, it will be rather in the form of *Heilsorakel*, the oracle of salvation in which the priest in the

1. *Dictionary of the Bible*, London, 1968, p. 687

2. *Prophecy and Religion, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah*, Cambridge, 1922, p. 227.

3. J. Lindblom, *Die literarische Gattung der prophetischen Literature*, Uppsala, 1924

cult expresses God's response to a lamentation. This form is particularly frequent in the Deutero-Isaiah:

Fear not for I am with you.
Be not dismayed for I am your God,

I will strengthen you... (Is 40, 10; cf. 41, 17-20; 43, 1-7. 14-15. 16-21; 44, 1-5; 46, 9-13; 54, 4-6. 7-10)⁴. In the Deuteronomic codification of the prophetic office, God says:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. (Dt. 18, 18).

The prophet is basically the bearer of God's oracles, not the mediator of man's prayer.

1. The forms of prayer

Yet the prophet is no mere inanimate mouthpiece. As G. Von Rad has shown, the prophet acts as an agent endowed with freedom and a sense of responsibility⁵. He does not simply repeat God's message. He appends his own words of explanation, justification, exhortation⁶. He is personally involved in the situation of his people; he feels concerned about the message he delivers; his utterances and writings reflect also the impact of the message upon himself.

Usually the oracle is prefaced by a diatribe or an exhortation. But occasionally a *hymn* is inserted to emphasize the majesty and the power of Him of whose message the prophet is

4. J. Begrich, "Das priestliche Heilsorakel", in *ZAW* 52 (1934), pp. 81-92; C. Stuhmueller, "Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah", *An Bib.* 43, Rome, 1970, pp 19-28.

5. *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*, Edinburgh-London, 1965, pp 72-76.

6. Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 37

the bearer. Such hymnic fragments or doxologies are already to be found in Amos (4, 13; 5, 8-9; 9, 5-6). It is not certain that these fragments go back to Amos himself⁷. At any rate prophetic tradition which followed saw them as a fitting climax to Amos's announcements of God's interventions. The hymn appears also in Jeremiah (5, 22-29) where it is much better integrated into the structure of the prophetic word⁸. In the Deutero-Isaiah, the hymnic style is particularly frequent (complete hymns: Is 42, 10-13; 44, 23; 49, 13; 52, 9-10, hymnic elements: 40, 22-24, 28-31; 44, 25-28; 45, 18; 46, 10-11). The purpose of these insertions is to express prophetic joy over Yahweh's act of creative redemption and also to strengthen the message of comfort by reminding Israel of God's supreme power⁹. In the prophets, the hymn is the proleptic response of man to God's eschatological manifestation. Isaiah describes the eternal hymn of praise sung by the Seraphim in the heavenly court (Is 6,3). Having access to the divine council (Is 6, 1-5; Jer 23, 18), the prophet echoes on earth the heavenly hymn of praise.

More frequent still is the case where the prophet echoes the *lamentations* of his people. In Hos. 14, 3-6, the prophet suggests only the words that Israel should address to God:

Take away all iniquity....
For with thee the orphan finds compassion.

-
7. To some extent the question is connected with that of how far Amos was a cultic prophet. The authenticity is defended by H. Graf Reventlow, *Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos*, FRLANT 80, Gottingen, 1962, pp 75-90. Against the authenticity, see H. W. Wolff, *Dodeka propheton - Amos*, BKAT 14, Neukirchen, 1969, pp 25-258; J. L. Mays, *Amos*, OT Library, London, 1969, pp 83-84; C. Hauret, *Amos et Osee*, Verb. Sal. AT 5, Paris, 1969, pp 59-60.
 8. S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship, II*, Oxford, 1962, p. 147
 9. C. StuhlmueLLer, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35

Here the prophet does not yet make the prayer his own. Later on, and especially in Jeremiah, the prophet joins whole-heartedly in the complaint of his people and shares in their distress. Thus Jer. 14 begins with the words:

The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah concerning the drought...

However, the verses that follow do not contain the words of Yahweh but the prayer of the people to Yahweh. Vv. 2-9 and 19-22 follow the literary form of a national lamentation: vv 2-6 describe the drought; v 7 is a confession of guilt; vv 8-9 are an apostrophe to Yahweh, the hope of Israel. The same themes are resumed in vv 19-22¹⁰. By inserting in vv 10-16 the divine response to this lament, the prophet builds up a tragic dialogue in which he voices both God's stern judgment and Israel's anguish and prayer. Similar forms of lament can be seen in Jer. 3, 22b-25, 4, 10; 31, 18-19; in Mic 7, 1-7 and in Is. 40, 27; 49, 14-24; 51, 9-10¹¹; cf also Is 59, 9-15; 63, 7-64, 11.

Two points may be noted in this connection:

1. By assuming the anguish of the people and voicing their prayer, the prophet takes on the role of intercessor. In Jer. 14, 11, God orders:

Do not intercede for the welfare of this people... which implies that the prophet would normally be expected to do so. The same implication transpires in 15, 1:

Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn towards this people.

Moses and Samuel were the two great intercessors (cf Ex 5, 22-23; 32: 11-14, 30-32; Nbr 11, 2; 14, 13-18; 16, 22; 21, 7; Dt 9, 24-28; 1 Sam 7, 9): intercession was understood to be part of their prophetic office. Yahwistic patriarchal history projected this role of

10. Cf. E. Lipinski, *La liturgie pénitentielle dans la Bible*, Lect. Div. 52. Paris, 1969, pp. 62-63.

11. Cf. S. Mowinckel, *op. cit.*, p. 148

intercessor back to Abraham in the episode discussing the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18, 22-33). It was assumed that the prophet was not only the intermediary of God's Judgment but the spokesman of the people in their anguish, confession and confidence (Jer. 7, 16; 11, 14; 13, 2-22; Ez 9, 8). Their prayer was to be resumed by the Suffering Servant (Is 53, 12) whose sacrificial surrender of his life would be the highest form of intercession (53, 4-5, 8, 10).

2. The second point is that the prophet partakes of the woes of his people. The tension between the divine sternness and the people's anguish tears the soul of the prophet himself. This is particularly true of Jeremiah. Whereas Ezechiel seems to announce doom, Jeremiah shouts his distress:

Whenever I speak, I cry out
and I shout: Violence and destruction! (Jer. 20, 8)

The collective complaint turns into an individual lamentation. The prophet's very calling is his trial. The woeful word of God burns his soul before it chastises the sinful people:

It is in my heart as it were a burning fire,
shut up in my bones.
I am weary with holding it and I cannot! (Jer. 20, 9).

On account of his mission, the prophet is exposed to persecution (11, 18-20; 20, 10); he feels isolated (15, 15-18). Doubt, the most crucifying of all trials, eats his heart:

Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook
like waters that fail? (Jer. 15, 18)

Was it not all a cruel game of God, trying to get a little miserable fun out of making a mockery of his prophet (20, 7)? Ultimately the prophet vents his frustration through the literary form of the *curse*. In the Psalms, as in the Egyptian execration texts, it is used against enemies (Ps 35; 59, 69, 22-29; 83). Jeremiah employs the same style (18, 21-23), but he turns the curse against himself. He personifies the day of his birth in a tragic prosopo-

peia that was to be imitated in the book of Job (Jer 20. 14-18; cf Job 3, 3-13). The dialogue with God seems to reach a point in despair, at which it can no longer be called prayer.

Yet dramatic accents of this kind should not mislead us. To some extent they are called for by the literary form that is used, and their emphasis is somewhat rhetorical. They do not mean that the prophet has given up hope altogether. In the same chapter 20 where Jeremiah's lament is most bitter, a *song of thanksgiving* bursts forth:

Sing to the Lord! Praise the Lord!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hands of evil doers (Jer. 20, 13).

Texts like Jon. 2, 2-10 and the canticle of Hezekia (Is 39, 10-20) show that, according to the Hebrew tradition, the prophet was also expected to voice the thanksgiving of those whom God had rescued. In a number of cases, a collective thanksgiving is the form used to express the prophetic message: the thanksgiving becomes prophetic. The eschatological joy is sung by the prophet in the present (Zep 3, 14-17; Jer 3, 17; Zec 9, 9).

2. Prophet and priest

Thus it appears that the prophets did not compose their prayers freely, following only their own inspiration and the poetical mood of the moment. They borrowed the set patterns used in the cult and even its very formulas. This raises the question of the relationship of prophetic prayer with the cult these forms were connected with. Were the prophets cultic ministers whose official function it was to lead the liturgical prayer of the Temple? As a reaction against the liberal conception of the prophet as a purely charismatic and individualistic figure, entirely desacralised, the view has been expressed that the prophets of Israel, like the Babylonian *baru* or *māhhu* might have belonged to the Temple personnel, playing a recognised role in Temple liturgy. This seems indeed to have been the case with the earlier prophets like Samuel and Nathan and even later with Huldah (2 Kgs 22, 14). Among the writer prophets, "there are some grounds to permit us to sclassify Nahum and Habakkuk...

Joel and Zechariah... as Temple prophets".¹² Isaiah and Ezekiel belonged to the Jerusalemite priesthood. Even Jeremiah was from a priestly family probably disestablished at the time of the deuteronomistic reformation.

Whichever may have been the case, the fact remains that the structure of the prophetic utterances betrays a deep relationship with the cultic language.¹³ We must take seriously into account the fact that most of the forms of cultic prayer used by the Israelites are found in the language of the prophets. This need not mean that the classical prophets had an official function in the cult. But it does mean that their mission was not at variance with the aims of the cult. The prophetic mission, like the cult, was to conduct a dialogue between man and God as well as between God and man. The difference was only that the prophets did this in a more direct way, through the medium of words rather than rites

3. The significance of prayer in the prophetic ministry

These observations enable us to draw a few conclusions as regards the nature of both prayer and the prophetic mission.

(i) The very fact that prayer plays the role that it does in prophetic pronouncements and writings shows that the prophet is man's representative as well as God's messenger. He does not stand only on God's side, keeping aloof from man's trials. He assumes to himself both the divine judgment and its impact. In him the divine Word is already made flesh and resounds in words of human anguish and joy. Prophetic prayer expresses this incarnational situation of the prophet. What S. Mowinckel says of the cultic prophet is true also of his prayer, even if we hesitate to associate it with the cult as thoroughly as Mowinckel does.

12. B. Vawter, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, London, 1968, p. 230

13. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and other Essays on the Old Testament*, London, 1952, pp. 104-105.

In Ancient Israel, the prophet was regarded as the right 'prayer man' in whose prayer there was great might (cf Gen 20. 3-7; 1Kgs 18, 41ff; 2Kgs 6, 17; Jer 37, 3; 42, 2ff)....

His might as a 'specialist in prayer' (Johnson) was put at the service of the community in the cult. It was part of the ministry of the cult prophets to act as an intercessor and that meant in fact also to recite the prayers that had to be recited then... Not only the cult oracle but also the cultic prayer was the responsibility of the prophet.¹⁴

When we come to the literary prophets, it is not certain that their prayer, though still cultic in form, was also this in fact. All the same Mowinkel's statement remains basically accurate: *prayer is an integral aspect of the prophet's mission.*

(ii) Being part of his mission, the prayer of the prophet is no abstract and detached contemplation leading him away from earthly realities into the realm of a life beyond. It stems from his solidarity with the people he is sent to. What Bauer says of the Israelite in general is particularly true of the prophet:

The pious Israelite is not a mystic who, having renounced this world, drinks deep of other-worldly delights. Rather he is a fighter who, even in his prayer, has to struggle to attain the objects of his longing... His goal is the Ultimate considered not statically as the summum bonum but dynamically as the universal dominion of God.¹⁵

The prophet at prayer is no yogi lost in contemplation but Jacob fighting with the angel. He is not a mystic in the sense of Plotinus or Shankara. The prophet's prayer is no *theoria*. The God of Israel remains hidden (Is 45, 15). He does not show

14. S. Mowinkel, *op. cit.*, p. 63

15. J. B. Bauer, "Prayer", *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology* ed. by J. B. Bauer, vol. 2, London, 1970, pp. 680-681.

himself to be contemplated. He speaks to be listened to. It is only in the later period of the Apocalyptic writings that the theme of the vision of God appears in the Bible. The prophets of the classical period commune with the Word of God rather than his vision.

(iii) The prophet, however, can be called a mystic if mysticism is understood as a living experience of God. Whether it arises from the heart of man's distress or springs from his awe before God's deeds, the prayer of the prophet is an encounter with the living God. What is remarkable in the intercessory prayer of the prophet is that he knows very often that his intercession will be ineffective. His message is that evil is too deeply rooted to be heald by a superficial contrition and immediate forgiveness. Yet he goes on praying, expressing to the Lord his distress and that of the people. He does not really ask for any favour: he knows that the evil is past redemption. He only meets the Lord in darkness. He is not asking for something. He is searching for somebody, whom he meets in his prayer. Such a prayer is its own answer. This attitude is already implied in the unhopeful prayers of Amos and of Isaiah (cf Is 6, 9-10). It is particularly evident in Jeremiah whose prayer is often a cry of anguish that meets the Lord in the utter dispossession that discouragement brings. Thus in Jer. 15, the prophet who cries:

Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail? (v. 18)

meets the Lord, who answers:

Therefore thus says the Lord:
If you return, I will restore you
and you shall stand before me (v. 19).

The prophet asks for comfort, relief, vengeance, redress. What he finds is the Lord himself.¹⁶

(iv) understood in this way, *prayer is the real cult in spirit and in truth*, the sacrifice really pleasing to God (cf Ps 50, 14-23).

16. J. Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-215

Hosea already saw in humble repentant prayer the true sacrifice that one has to take to the Lord.

Take with you words and return to the Lord.

Say to him...we will render the fruit of our lips¹⁷

(Hos 14, 3).

The literary form of this prayer is possibly that of a penitential liturgy. The juxtaposition of prayer in vv 1-3 and of an oracle of salvation in vv 4-8 reflects the structure of such a liturgy.¹⁸ However, this liturgy is not performed in the Temple but in the heart. Its offering is "the fruit of the lips", that is, prayer alone. The same phrase "fruit of the lips" as a description of a genuine offering to God is resumed in Is 57, 18. Israel looked for God in the Temple (cf ps 24, 6; 105, 4): the phrase "to seek God" meant to go to the Temple. At the time of the Exile, when the Temple has been destroyed and the people are in Exile, Jeremiah tells the Babylonian *golah* that it is in their heart that God is to be sought and will be found (Jer 29, 12-14; cf Is 55, 6; 58, 9). It is the whole experience of his life and of his prophetic prayer that Jeremiah expresses in these terms. Prophetic prayer anticipates the new covenant. In it, God himself "puts his love in the hearts" (Jer 32, 40) and teaches from inside the knowledge of him (31, 34). When the last and the greatest of the Prophets will have revealed the fatherhood of God and poured forth the Spirit of sonship, prophetic prayer will be given to those who receive this Spirit of prayer crying in their hearts: Abba! Father! (Gal 4, 6).

St Peter's Seminary,
Bangalore-12.

L. Legrand

17. The MT reads: "Bulls' lips." (*peri* instead of *parim* is the reading of the LXX and of the peschitto. The text need not be emended if we read *perim*, taking the final mem as an old Canaanite case-ending. Cf. H. W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheton I, Hosea*, BKAT XIV/I, Neukirchen, 1961, p. 30.

18. J. L. Mays, *Hosea*, Old Testament Lib., London p. 185.

The Psalms as a School of Prayer

Prayer is best understood as a constant attitude of our daily life – an attitude of openness to God and to our fellow human beings. There is something mysterious about it in so far as it involves our relationship with God who is the mysterious One. Have I made contact with God? How do I stand in relation to Him? Am I rightly disposed to the Divine Reality? Am I fully aware of the divine dimension of my life? Prayer, so understood, is extremely personal. Exercises, rites, gestures and formulas of prayer have no meaning apart from the inner attitude of prayer.

Many people are deeply troubled by the difficulties concerning God and prayer, which are frequently raised or discussed in our modern society, so much so they give up praying. This shows that they have had no personal experience of prayer.

Even good Christians often understand less about adoration and praise of God, and thanksgiving, than about petitions for favours. Even in prayer they have a utilitarian approach; they expect tangible results. If they are disappointed, as they must often be, they again are tempted to give up prayer.

A modern type of Christian would be quite ready for some sacrifice in order to help the poor or to meet other concrete needs of their fellowmen. But they have no relish for spending a few moments in prayer and silence before God. The God they worship is remote from them; they do not speak familiarly with Him as the psalmists did. All the same they are reconciled to the idea of taking part in some common exercise of prayer. Their relationship with God is not yet quite personal.

No doubt the Church is passing through a crisis of prayer. We hear of the faithful questioning the relevance of contemplative

communities, and of monks themselves beginning to doubt the authenticity of their vocation and wanting to involve themselves more in external activity. On the other hand it can be maintained that if there is a form of Christian life indispensable to modern society, it is the vocation of a life of prayer. It is the one thing necessary for all true progress and success.

Given the fact that there is so much lack of clarity about the nature and function of prayer, it is not at all surprising that there is a considerable lack of interest in the Psalms of the Old Testament. Since, however, they figure so prominently in the official prayers of the Church, it will be worth while trying to examine and clarify this question. Obviously we should begin by asking whether the Psalms are truly a Christian form of prayer.

1. What is Christian Prayer ?

There is but one Voice with which man or angel can praise God and pray to Him — the Word uttered eternally in the ineffable communion of the Divine Life, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The Word, in Himself, is the eternal Act of praise and adoration and thanksgiving and supplication: He is, in Himself, perfect Prayer. All mankind are offered a share in His life of total self-offering to the Father. In conjunction with His Spirit, He is the unique Source of all prayer offered anywhere. All human beings are created in Him and for Him. It is He who enlightens all men, and offers them a share in His own life and prayer.

The action of Christ, the Word Incarnate, obviously has two aspects: there were the actions performed during His earthly life, at specific times and in specific places; there is also the Act of the eternal Word of God, which is beyond the limitations of time and place, and which can therefore reach all times and places and persons. Anyone who turns to God in love and prayer does so by obeying the Spirit of Christ, by union with the Son of God. Where anyone is concerned, to pray is to have the attitude of Christ.

Being joined to the Son of God in life and prayer is not necessarily a matter of knowing Him explicitly. Anyone who

recognises the supreme Reality of God and puts his trust in Divine Providence, is taught to do so by the Spirit of Christ. Such a person becomes like the obedient Son of God. When he fights evil and accepts the sufferings that come his way, and is ready for self-sacrifice in the cause of truth and goodness and holiness, by this very fact he is taking up his daily cross and following in the footsteps of his crucified Saviour, the one Mediator between God and men.

When Christ was here on earth, He continually pleaded with God, prayed with tears and agony of soul to the God who could save Him and all His followers from defeat and death. In the Garden and on the Cross He experienced and uttered the agony and anguish of all weak human beings, of whom He was the Head. Because of His humble submission His prayer was heard. Though He was God's own Son, He learned obedience in the school of suffering. Having achieved perfection, He has become the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey His Spirit (cf. Hebr. 5, 7f). He pleads for us now at the Father's right hand. This is the Christ-Fact which provides the foundation and possibility of all our prayer.

2 The Psalmists were Christian

The Psalmists of the Old Testament have a distinguished place among those who obey the Spirit of Christ (cf. I Pet. 1, 10f). They were willing to suffer in the cause of righteousness, and they firmly believed in the ultimate victory of truth and goodness. Thus merely by "preferring to suffer hardship with the people of God rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin" (Hebr. 11, 25), they attained union with the Son of God, and shared in His dispositions of love and obedience and humility and self-sacrifice. Consequently they also shared in His eternal Act of praise and adoration and thanksgiving and supplication. The Psalmists heralded the mystery of the incarnate Christ more by their holy lives than by their ideas and words. Their humble but heroic acceptance of suffering was an anticipated sharing in the Passion of Christ, while the courage and confidence and joy, which the Holy Spirit inspired in them, were an anticipation of the victory and glory of Christ.

Because the Psalms are not only divine but also truly human, they have their obvious limitations. We will return to this question later. But the most wonderful thing about each Psalm is that it is the record of a deep personal experience of God. Whatever might be the particular situation of the Psalmist — one of joy and gratitude or of suffering and perplexity — God is experienced by him as supreme Reality. He has an unshakable conviction about the supreme importance of clinging to God as the only ultimate Good.

God is our strength....

We shall not be afraid

even if the earth gives way.... (Ps. 46).

Here is an important lesson that all men equally need to learn. It is not enough that we know particular truths about God in a theoretical manner. We are called to a personal knowledge and love of God Himself. We must seek after the Lord with all our heart and with all our soul, so as to find Him personally, and love Him with all our strength. We must learn to have recourse to the Lord in the midst of the varied experiences of our daily life, listen to the Lord's voice and find life and peace and salvation in His will for us (cf. Deut. 4-6). This is what it means to pray. It is a program of life rather than a performance of prescribed rites and chants.

3. God-centred Prayer

The Psalmists are pastmasters in this art of recourse to God in the midst of the joys and sorrows and perplexities of daily life. For them God is distinctly the supreme and all-comprehending Reality. They see Him in all things and all things in Him. This is the gift of contemplation. No doubt the great value of the Psalms is that they are perfectly contemplative. Their profound *sense of God* is what we Christians also need to acquire through our use of them.

Too often we are more ready to judge than to understand: we allow ourselves to be distracted and disturbed by what strikes us as the shortcomings of the Psalms, and we do not pay enough attention to this matter of humbly sharing in the Psalmists' profound sense of God, of His nearness and love.

God, You are my God, I seek You early
 with a heart that thirsts for You....
 So longing, I come before You in the sanctuary
 to look upon Your power and glory.
 Your true love is better than life (Ps. 63).
 I will praise You, for You fill me with awe;
 wonderful You are, and wonderful are Your works
 (Ps. 139).

We see how completely the Psalmist is taken up by the supreme Reality of God. For him it is God alone who counts: "Your love is better than life"! Do we have the same sense of God? or do we tend, on the other hand, to be satisfied with a neat doctrine about God?

Any Psalm is primarily communion with God in love and loyalty. In spite of appearances to the contrary, the Psalmists' predominant interest is not in material and worldly things. Above all the Psalmist offers himself unconditionally to the God of his fathers. This is the essential meaning of a Psalm. Contemplation of God, praise, adoration, joy and thanksgiving have primacy. Even when petition is most urgent, it is secondary. The Psalmist knows that God's love is better than life and all it offers. He is fully committed to God and His will.

Petition does have a place, and sometimes even an important place in our prayer inasmuch as we men cannot ignore the worldly and practical aspects of our life. All that life produces, including all our problems, must be taken to God. Even bitter complaints and expostulation have their rightful place in prayer. They are a necessary product of our close relation with God amid the stresses and strains and intolerable burdens and agonies of our present life.

But prayer has its unshakable basis in the fact of God revealing Himself to us as all-sufficient. He is to be loved and rejoiced in for His own sake, not for the sake of His gifts.

Compared with You I desire nothing else on earth.
 Though heart and body fail, yet God is my possession
 forever (Ps. 73).

Weak in himself, the Psalmist is strong in God. He has an experience of the God in whom he can do all things, and without whom he can do nothing.

4. The Psalms are a divine school

Such a personal experience of God is the heart of every Psalm. It is the record of such an experience. And it is an *inspired* record. This is a matter of no small importance for the believer. It is this that makes a Psalm a word of God.

We insisted on the fact that the Psalm is primarily and essentially the record of a personal experience of communion with God. Inspiration means that this record was written under the decisive influence of the Holy Spirit, and that God wanted the faithful to have this record as an instrument of His own teaching. It is God who teaches us through a Psalm, not simply the Psalmist. The human limitations of a Psalm are not an insoluble problem for the divine Teacher. God has chosen what is weak and foolish in our world to shame the wise and the strong, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. For us Christians it is the God of Jesus Christ who grants us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification through the reading and meditation of the Psalms.

It is clear that we cannot profit by the Psalms as we ought to unless we approach them in a deep spirit of faith, the faith of the Christian church. The church invites us to a *Christian reading* of the Psalms. She does not necessarily point to the Psalmists as perfect models of Christian holiness. She does commend the Psalms to us as records of a genuine devotion to God and a genuine concern for man's well being. But further, there is the important but mysterious fact that through Inspiration the human written record has become a *divine school*, where our one Master is God Himself.

And what does God wish to impart to us through the Psalms? A personal experience of communion with God such as the Psalmists had in spite of their severe human limitations, an experience which is the gift of God to His "little children", to the simple and humble whose concern is not to sit in judgment on

the Psalmists, but only to learn from God how to know and love Him as the absolutely faithful Lover of men, who revealed Himself to the humble singers of Israel.

II

We said above that prayer is essentially our inner attitude of openness to God and to men. Without this attitude external rites have no meaning. The prayerful attitude, as expressed in the Psalms, implies a certain view of the relationship between God, man and the world. We will now attempt an outline of this view.

5. The Psalmists' view of life: the God-man relationship

The Psalms bear witness to the God of love and compassion who revealed Himself to His people through the decisive events of their history. The deliverance from Egypt was an experience of the God who works wonders, who manifests His power among the peoples (Ps. 77). His footprints were not seen; His arm was invisible. Still the people were convinced that it was God who led His people by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

It is the firm faith-conviction about God's past intervention in their history that created in them the constant hope of His future intervention. The recalling of past events, in the Psalms as in the Books of Moses, was aimed at a goal to be reached in the present — namely, an experience of the God of deliverance on the part of the present generation of the faithful. Transmission of a living faith in the God of salvation is equally a problem for the Christian people.

Not only has God spoken through events, through the prophets and the Law; He is also continuously at work in all creation, and through it all He speaks to our hearts. All Nature and all people ought to be a mirror in which we see the image of the glorious Creator. Such contemplation produces in the believer a firm conviction about the majesty of God. He cannot help wondering at the gracious love and generosity of the great God who is mindful of little man and who wants to put all

things under man's feet and to crown him with glory and honour. The faith and loyalty of God's "little children" are His refutation of the proud and mighty who deny Him (Ps. 8).

The believer understands, through being taught by God's Spirit, that the world and its order are not self-originated and self-explanatory. It is God who set the earth on its foundations and set a bound for the sea. It is He who makes the winds and the clouds carry out His purpose, causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and lets men have food and wine to gladden their heart (Ps. 104; see also Ps. 139).

The Psalms invite us to meditation on history and to the contemplation of Nature so that we may understand God's steadfast love and learn to rejoice in Him, our Creator and Saviour. There is a deep undercurrent of joy running through the Psalms:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;
His love is everlasting (Ps. 136).

This undying joy, born of love and a living hope, is not distinct from Christian joy. The Psalms can be a great help towards our achieving it as a personal possession.

That the Lord remains absolutely faithful to His Covenant even in the face of His people's repeated rebellion and disloyalty is a matter of unceasing wonder and gratitude in Psalm after Psalm. The Lord can be depended upon even in the most desperate situation:

Our soul waits for the Lord,
He is our help and shield.
Yea, our heart is glad in Him,
because we trust in His holy Name.
Let Your steadfast love, Lord, be upon us
even as we hope in You (Ps. 33).

To realise the Lord's love and lordship brings a peace and assurance that the world cannot take away:

The Lord is near to the broken-hearted....
many are the afflictions of the righteous;
but the Lord delivers him out of them all (Ps. 34).

At the same time this assurance and joy are tempered with self-distrust: the consciousness that by our infidelities we forfeit our claim to the Lord's love and protection.

Oh that My people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in My ways:
I would soon subdue their enemies (Ps. 81).

Those chosen and favoured by the Lord must beware lest they thwart the grace of their call. From the Lord's infinite graciousness and our constant tendency to wander away from Him it follows that our life must be a tension, a struggle, a continual conversion.

But even here the message of the Psalms is one of undying hope. No desolation however dark, no adversity however great, ought to make us forget the truth of the Lord's love and promise which stand for ever. One must confidently wait upon the Lord:

Lord, my God, I call for help by day,
I cry out in the night before You... (Ps. 88).

Man must humble himself before the Lord and gain wisdom from Him so as to be able to solve the riddle of existence.

Teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom (Ps. 90).

The one who confesses his guilt, and is ready to return to the Lord will be healed by Him (Ps. 32; see Pss. 91 - 103).

But when all is said and done, neither clever explanations nor earnestness of effort and search can eliminate the cross from our life. The ultimate test of fidelity is the acceptance of the cross and the transcending of it through a living hope in God's love and power.

The past wonderful deeds of God ought to lead to present confidence and assurance, and this confidence ought to be realised

in actual experience. But this may not be the case. The believer may have the bitter experience of being "cast off", left to the mercy of his unscrupulous enemies, abandoned by almighty God. To pray urgently to the God of love and power in a desperate situation and to receive no reply day after day is really to have the *experience* of being abandoned by God.

Occasionally a Psalm ends on a note of near despair:

Look away from me that I may know gladness,
before I depart and be no more! (Ps. 39).

You have caused lover and friend to shun me;
my companions are in darkness (Ps. 88).

Remember, Lord, how Your servant is scorned (Ps. 89).

Even in such places there is the realisation that God's silence is not final, that He will vindicate His oppressed people, that even in the darkness His love is mysteriously at work.

Rise up, come to our help,
deliver us for the sake of Your steadfast love (Ps. 44).

The struggle is hard, and immediate victory uncertain. There is an unresolved tension between doubt and assurance, hope and despair, disquiet and peace. This is part of our human condition. Even in situations of critical illness, persecution, loneliness and personal tragedy, the Psalmists could bear up and go forward. They had received no revelation about reward in a future life. Their courage is therefore the sign of an unusually robust faith. Christians who have a far more definite hope and more abundant light do not always resist the temptation to "curse God" and to have done with piety (cf. Job 2, 9).

Some among the faithful have been favoured with the experience of a wonderful deliverance from serious evil.

The Lord sent forth His word and healed them,
and delivered them from destruction:
let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love (Ps. 107).
You have turned for me my mourning into dancing...
that I may praise You, and not be silent (Ps. 30).

To have had an experience of God's love and care and power, and His utter dependability, is indeed a precious grace. This

means that the traditional faith comes alive in one's own personal life and experience, so that one is able to shout: "It is the Lord!" (cf. Jn. 21, 7). Such an experience is not to be hidden away and forgotten. It must be shared with all the faithful. The one favoured by God feels that he must praise and thank the Lord "in the midst of the congregation".

All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord, ...
men shall tell of the Lord to the coming
generation (Ps. 22).

To have known the Lord is to want to make Him known more and more. When Mary received the Good News of the risen Lord, she was commissioned to carry this News to others.

Many Psalms are written with the purpose of instruction, the imparting of divine wisdom (Pss. 1; 19; 24; 112; 127 etc). The Psalmist who has responded to God in love and gladness wants to help others to make the same response. These 'wisdom' Psalms deal with the connexion between faith and conduct, between worship and life. The one who is admitted into the divine Presence must walk blamelessly and do only what is right, without doing any evil to his fellowmen (Ps. 15). The man who reverences the Lord must deal generously and conduct his affairs with justice.

The longest Psalm, 119, which is an extended meditation on the Scriptures as a precious gift of God, deserves special mention. It is wholly the expression of a deep love of God's written word in the Scriptures. Any one who loves the Lord must love His word. To rely on the Lord's word is to rely on the Lord Himself, and thus to gain life and salvation.

Oh, how I love Your law (= Scriptures),
it is my meditation all the day ...
if Your law had not been my delight,
I should have perished in my affliction.

So great are the dangers to which the just man is exposed in this life that he might not be able to save himself if he did not rely on the support of God's written word. What is said here

about the Scriptures in general can be applied to the Psalms, and it helps us to understand their unique importance.

6. The limitations of the Psalms

One of the chief difficulties experienced by the Christian reader in his use of the Psalms is the passages in which the Psalmists speak of their enemies, "the wicked". No doubt we fail to understand the exact situation of the Psalmist, and the reason for the violence of his reaction against his persecutors. It is good to remember that the Psalmist is not a self-centred person capable of hatred and meditating petty revenge. He sees certain people as embodying the force of Evil that tends to undermine the life of the faithful, the coming of God's Kingdom. He is deeply worried that people should openly defy God's law and thwart the life and activities of those who refuse to join with them. It is a question therefore of a holy impatience. Why are truth and goodness at a disadvantage in our world? Why doesn't God intervene? It is surely a conventional language that is used to express this holy indignation.

A Rumanian pastor, Richard Wurmbrand, in his book *In God's Underground* speaks of Christians who were subjected to brain-washing in a communist prison. One of them was carried bruised and bloody into a prison room for the dying. He is reported as saying spontaneously about his "re-educator": "If ever I get my hands on that man I'll skin him alive". Another Christian in the group remarked about their persecutors: "God will not let anyone into Paradise who does not curse the bastards".

This is how Christians who were dying for their faith expressed themselves in their pain and perplexity. Let us not want to judge people in such situations. The wicked are a terrible reality of our world. They are capable of mass murder, arson, rape and looting, as even recent history has shown us. How would the victims feel in such situations? How would they express themselves? We who have been spared must be sympathetic. Let us not be so isolated in our own limited experience as to be unable to understand others with different problems, and let us not lay down norms of conduct for everybody. Do we feel with

those who are persecuted to death even today? Are we able to enter into their experience of Evil? If we are not deeply involved, and are not troubled and do not knock hard at God's door, our claim to moral superiority over the Psalmists becomes doubtful.

Other difficulties we experience are of a similar nature. How can we join the Psalmists in their solemn profession of innocence, or share with them a misery or an anguish, an exaltation or a jubilation, that we never experienced? In the first case mentioned we misunderstand the import of the Psalmist's words. In connexion with some sacred rite he is clearing himself of some false accusations brought against him. For the rest, do we mean to say that we are not interested in what does not affect us personally? Are we unable to enter sympathetically into the joys and sorrows of others, to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep? Do we stand before God our common Father as lone individuals or as part of the whole people of God? Are we ready to join the one Mediator and the one Spirit who pray in all?

The God-intended function of the Psalms is to make us share in the religious experience of the holy men who wrote them. Their experience was primarily an experience of God Himself, of familiar communion with Him in the varied situations of their daily existence, and of living their life in terms of this communion. Such an experience of God is surely a precious grace that God wishes to offer to all who seek Him sincerely. But it is possible that we are satisfied with our traditional knowledge of God and neither desire nor seek the grace of an intimate personal experience of Him. The Psalms are the God-given instrument of such an experience, and as such cannot be valued too highly.

Vidya Jyoti

C. M. Cherian

Delhi - 6

Imprecations in the Psalms: their Positive Value

There is not the least exaggeration in saying that the imprecations found in the Psalms disturb the majority of Christian believers, who, therefore, demand that these "unchristian" expressions of hatred and revenge, so typical of the Jewish mentality, should be altogether dropped from the Church's public prayer.¹ Professional exegetes,² however, find them quite meaningful and relevant, and have therefore investigated them in detail.³ The reason for the average believer's plight particularly is a lack of acquaintance with the literary forms and world of ideas of the peoples of the ancient Orient. There is, in addition, a good bit of blind and stubborn prejudice, of which he may very seldom be conscious, and which, if pointed out, he will be quite unwilling to admit. It is the purpose of this article

-
1. This suggestion has been followed up in the interim edition of the new Roman Breviary, in which we also come across the following statement: "Three psalms which do not easily lend themselves to Christian usage have been omitted (Ps. 57, 82 and 108 according to the numeration of the Hebrew Bible, Ps. 58, 83 and 109). Certain verses of other psalms have been omitted for the same reason" (cf. *The Prayer of the Church* London, 1971, p. xxiv). The persons who penned these words betray not only their prejudice but also their stark and bleak ignorance of biblical science, ancient Semitic culture and even the elementary forms of human psychology.
 2. Of course we speak of those who are devoid of the rabid anti Jewish feelings so prevalent among Christians.
 3. Cf. H. C. Brichto, *The Problem of "Curse" in the Hebrew Bible* (Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 13, Philadelphia, 1963). H. A. Brongers, "Die Rache- und

to study, in the light of ancient oriental traditions, the curses uttered by Israel's inspired poets and to endeavour to bring out their positive value for us Christians.

I

Let it be noted, at the outset, that blessings and curses were an important literary form of the ancient Middle East; that is, they were an essential part of the conventional speech of the peoples of the Fertile Crescent.⁴ We wish also to emphasize here the fact that maledictions, for reasons that will become clear in the course of our discussions, were considered more important than benedictions, so much so that in documents as much space as possible was set apart for them. To illustrate what has

Fluchpsalmen im Alten Testament," *Studies on the Psalms* (Oudtestamentische Studiën XIII [Leiden, 1963/]), pp. 21-42. S. Gevirtz, "West-Semitic Curses and the Problem of the Origin of Hebrew Law," *Vetus Testamentum* 11 (1961) pp. 137-69. Id., *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 32, Chicago, 1963). J. Hempel, "Die israelitischen Anschauungen von Segen und Fluch im Lichte der altorientalischen Parallelen, *Apoxysmata. Vorarbeiten zu einer Religionsgeschichte und Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift der altestamentlichen Wissenschaft 81, Berlin, 1961), pp. 29-113. D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets* (Biblica et Orientalia 16, Rome, 1964). S. Mowinckel, *Psalmestudien V: Segen und Fluch in Israels Kult und Psalmendichtung* (Oslo, 1924). J. Scharbert, *Solidarität im Segen und Fluch im Alten Testament und in seiner Umwelt. I, Väterfluch und Vätersegen* (Bonner biblische Beiträge 14, Bonn, 1948). Id., "'Fluchen' und 'Segen' im Alten Testament," *Biblica* 39 (1958) pp. 1-26.

4. The vast expanse of territory from Egypt to the Persian Gulf, which, roughly speaking, is the area of influence of the Semito-Hamitic peoples, and is now the stronghold of Islam, forms a sort of crescent, the sign sacred to the Moslems; hence the expression Fertile Crescent. We must not fail to note here that curses play an important rôle in the religious

been said, we may refer to the Code of Hammurabi,⁵ in whose epilogue benedictions occupy only about 20 lines and maledictions nearly 300 lines!⁶ Or, turning to the OT, we find that in Dt. 28 blessings cover vv. 1-14 and curses vv. 15-68! The significance the Semitic peoples of antiquity attached to curses may be gathered from the fact that codes of law, international documents, decisions of courts, monuments, etc. had affixed to them series of maledictions whose nature, number and length were no doubt determined by the conventions of the times.

We can distinguish two types of curses in the Orient, viz, the preventive or anticipatory one whose purpose is to prevent the doing of mischief in the immediate or distant future, and the punitive or retributive one which is actually a punishment

literature of popular Hinduism (e. g., in some of the stories in the Purāṇas), but the idea that curses can work havoc can be traced back to the age of Vedas, and this tradition for its part originated in the period of Indo-European unity when the use of magic for various purposes was quite common (on this point, cf. R. Schmidt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* [Wiesbaden, 1967], pp. 285-94). The Sanskrit term denoting malediction is *śāpa*, formed from the Indo-European base *k'op-* (found also in the common term *śab-da*). It occurs in Vedic literature. The Atharvaveda contains charm and spells to counteract the aftermath of curses; we add here a brief specimen: "Avoid us, O Curse, as a burning fire (avoids) a lake! Strick here him that curses us, as the lightning of heaven the tree! He that shall curse us when we do not curse, and he that shall curse us when we do curse, him do I hurl to death as a bone to a dog upon the ground" (Book VI, 37, 2-3. For the text, cf. M. Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda* [Sacred Books of the East 42, Delhi, 1967], p. 93).

5. King of Babylon (1792-50 B. C.). For the original text, cf. E. Bergmann, *Codex Hammurabi, textus primogenius* (Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 3rd ed., Rome, 1953).
6. For the benedictions, cf. col. XLII, lines 2-17; for the maledictions, cf. cols. XLII, 18-20, XLIII, 1-106, and XLIV, 1-90).

for a misdeed or an act of impiety that has already been committed.⁷ Most of the curses in the OT belong to the first type, which alone will, therefore, be the object of our investigation. To give the reader some idea of the rich variety of maledictions in use among the ancients we cite here a couple of examples from various sources.

Reference has already been made to the Code of Hammurabi; here are some of the curses inscribed on the stelae against those who fail to observe the laws or tamper with the monument: "If that man⁸ did not heed my words... and disregarded my curses..., may mighty Anum,⁹ the father of the gods...

7. From the literary sources left us by ancient Semites we learn that punitive curses were uttered when a son engineered a coup to oust his father from his position of authority, or when he had intercourse with his father's women and thus through a symbolical action wrested power from him. The story of a domestic coup is preserved by Ugaritic literature: when king Kirta was old and sickly, and hence unable to discharge his duties, the crown-prince asked him to step down; thereupon the old man pronounced the following curse:

"May Horon break, O son,
May Horon break thy head,
Even Attarat the Name-of-Baal thy pate!
Mayest thou fall in the exuberance of thy years!

Even in the fulness (of thy strength) and be troubled" (cf. J. Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* [Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 5, 2nd ed., Leiden, 1965], p. 150). The Hebrew Bible preserves two stories about incest and the curse imposed on the culprits by their fathers. Noah cursed Canaan who, according to the original draft of the story, saw his nakedness as he was lying drunk and unconscious in his tent (Gen. 9: 20-27); now the phrase "to see the nakedness of one's father" is a euphemism for intercourse with one's father's wives. The second story is quite explicit and needs no comment (cf. Gen. 35 : 22. 49 : 3-4).

8. The writer here means kings.

9. Anum and Enlil (as also Baalshamem, El, Sahar, Nikkal and Nusk, to be met with in the texts to follow) are all gods

deprive him of the glory of sovereignty, may he break his sceptre, may he curse his fate! May Enlil... incite revolts against him in his abode which cannot be suppressed, misfortune leading to his ruin! May he determine as the fate for him a reign of woe, days few in number, years of famine, darkness without light, sudden death! May he order by his forceful word the destruction of his city, the dispersion of his people, the transfer of his kingdom, the disappearance of his name and memory from the land... May the mighty gods of heaven and earth... curse him, his descendants, his land, his warriors, his people, and his nation, with foul curses! May Enlil... curse him with these curses, and may they come upon him quickly."¹⁰

We shall now illustrate the pattern of curses in international documents with the help of a few lines from a treaty between two rulers of the ancient Middle East who, oddly enough, belonged to the Indo-European family. The personages we have in mind here are Shuppiluliuma, the ruler of the Hittite empire (1375-1335 B.C.) and Mattiwaza¹¹, the Mitanni king. When the latter became a vassal of the former, quite in keeping with the customs of the times, a special treaty was drawn up, to which were added the following curses which were supposed to fall upon Mattiwaza whenever he proved unfaithful to the provisions of the solemn agreement. "If you, Mattiwaza... do not fulfil the words of this treaty, may the gods, the lords of the oath, blot

10. The passage is taken from cols. XLIX, lines 45-80, and LI, 86-91 (cf. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., Princeton, 1955, pp. 179-80).

11. This is a genuine Indo-Aryan name which would have in Sanskrit the form *Matī vāja*, "he whose victorious power is prayer." The reading given in the text, incidentally, is not the only possible one, and there are scholars who have pronounced themselves in favour of the readings Kurtiwaza and Šatiwaza. A discussion of these points, which is bound to be highly technical, cannot be attempted here. For details, cf. A. Kammenhuber, *Die Arier im Vorderen Orient* (Indogermanische Bibliothek, dritte Reihe: Untersuchungen, Heidelberg, 1968), pp. 81-84.

you out, (you) Mattiwaza and (you) the Hurri men¹² together with your country, your wives and all that you have... may you Mattiwaza with a second wife that you may take,¹³ and (you) the Hurri men with your wives, your sons and your country have no seed... May the earth be coldness so that you fall down slipping. May the soil of your country be hardened quagmire so that you break in, but never get across. May you, Mattiwaza, and (you) the Hurrians, be hateful to the thousand gods, may they pursue you."¹⁴

We cite here another political document, viz, a treaty from about 750 B. C. between the ruler of KTK¹⁵ the sovereign and Mattiel king of Arpad and vassal of KTK. "If Mattiel... is false (to the gods of this treaty)... seven rams shall tup a ewe, and she shall not become pregnant. Seven mares shall suck a colt, and it shall not be sated. Seven cows shall suckle a calf, and it shall not be sated. Seven ewes shall suckle a lamb, and it shall not be sated. His seven daughters shall go in search of food, and they shall not arouse concern..."¹⁶

Curses were inscribed on monuments with a view to protecting them from all those who might tamper with them, or, what is still worse, destroy them. The passage that follows is taken from the Phoenician text of the inscription of Azitawadda the ruler of Adana (in modern Turkey) in the 8th century B. C. "If there be a king among kings and a prince among princes or a man who is (just) called a man¹⁷ who shall wipe out the name of Azitawadda from this gate and put down his own name, even if he has good intentions towards this city but removes

12. Or Horites, in the terminology of the OT; modern scholars prefer the more correct form Hurrians.

13. The chief wife of Mattiwaza was a daughter of Shuppiliuma, and hence the reference to his second wife.

14. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (henceforth *ANET*), pp. 205-6.

15. The vocalization of these consonants, and the identity of the country thus designated, are not clear.

16. *ANET Supplement* (Princeton, 1969), p. 659.

17. That is, an ordinary man without titles, dignity, rank etc.

the gate which was made by Azitawadda and makes for the (new) gate a new frame and puts his name upon it, whether he removes this gate with good intentions or out of hatred and evil, let Baalshamem and El the creator of the earth and the Eternal Sun and the whole group of the children of the gods wipe out that ruler and that king and that man who is (just) called a man."¹⁸

Among monuments must be included tombs and sarcophagi which stood in danger of being ransacked by hunters after hidden treasure, and in order to preclude this danger terrible curses – all of them as a rule rather brief – were inscribed on sepulchres and coffins. We shall cite here two texts, the first of which is Phoenician and goes back to the early 10th century B. C. "If there be a king among kings and a governor among governors and an army commander up in Byblos who shall uncover this sarcophagus, let his royal throne be upset! May peace flee from Byblos, and he himself be wiped out!"¹⁹ The second text, dating from the 7th century B. C., occurs on the sarcophagus of an Aramean priest. "They did not place with me a vessel of silver and bronze... Whoever you are who shall do wrong and remove me, may Sahar, Nikkal and Nusk cause him to die a miserable death, and may his posterity perish."²⁰

We shall bring our list of examples to a close with a specimen curse from ancient Egypt. The text to be cited here is a conditional imprecation uttered by a woman, named Rem-nofer who wanted to grant the status of freemen to her foster children who happened to be slaves. "As Amon endures and as the Ruler endures, I make the people whom I have recorded freemen of the land of Pharaoh. Should a son or a daughter or a brother or a sister of their mother or of their father contest with them, may a donkey copulate with him and a female donkey copulate with his wife..."²¹

18. *ANET Sup.*, p. 654.

19. *ANET Sup.*, p. 661.

20. *ANET Sup.*, *ibid.*

21. J. A. Wilson, "The Oath in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7 (1948) pp. 129–56 (cf p. 148, no. 114)

The reader should not imagine that the few examples cited here do adequate justice to the richness and variety of the maledictions in vogue among the peoples of the Middle East. In fact, as has already been noted, this is one of the most significant literary genres of the whole of antiquity, and the copious use the ancients made of this form arises from several factors which will be made clear in the course of the ensuing discussions. Let us now try to see what exactly is the object of preventive maledictions, i. e., the specific good of which they seek to deprive the person who is cursed

II

According to scholars who have studied in detail the question of curses in the Middle East,²² the objects of curses invariably are governmental and military sovereignty, human/animal and agricultural fertility, and physical and spiritual salubrity. These themes can be illustrated with the help of passages from biblical and non-biblical sources.

By Governmental sovereignty is meant the position of power and authority people are wont to associate with rulers. The epilogue to the Code of Hammurabi denies it altogether to the king who ever dares to go counter to the Code's provisions or tamper with the stelae: the god Anum will deprive him of the glory of sovereignty and break his sceptre. Military sovereignty consisting in the ruler's ability to vanquish his foes is also denied to the offender by the document we are considering; the outbreak of revolts that cannot be suppressed, the destruction of the king's city, the dispersion of his people, and the transfer of

22. Cf. the authorities cited in n. 3. The writer wishes to mention here his special indebtedness to the unpublished Ph. D. dissertation of his revered professor at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, S. Gevirtz, *Curse Motifs in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (University of Chicago, 1959). For a summary of the conclusions of these investigations, cf. Gevirtz, *Patterns*, p. 47, "Curses," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, I, Nashville, 1962), pp. 749-50.

his kingdom to another do, in fact, mean the total and effective elimination of his military might.

Fertility in all its forms is very often the object of curses. Thus Mattiwaza is told that the second wife he may take as well as the wives of the people of his country, along with their sons, will never have any issue. The following curse, though rather crude, is nonetheless quite illustrative: "May Mati'ilu's seed be that of a mule, his wives barren, ... may Ishtar the goddess cause their sterility."²³ Animals too can be cursed and rendered useless, as is clear from the treaty between KTK and Arpad: even if seven rams mate with a ewe, it will not become pregnant. Finally the land is cursed and made pernicious and barren. This is quite clear from the treaty between Shuppiluliuma and Mattiwaza: the earth will become cold, so that Mattiwaza will slip and fall down; it will become a hardened quagmire. Here is another example which is no less illustrative: "Let the farmers of his land not sing the harvest song in the fields,²⁴ no vegetation should spring forth in the open country and see the sunlight... not draw water from the springs."²⁵

By salubrity we mean well being in its most comprehensive sense, i. e., well-being which is both physical and spiritual. The threat of illness and sudden, premature, violent and painful death obviously means the complete and total elimination of physical salubrity, and for reasons that are only too obvious,

23. *ANET Sup.*, p. 533.

24. The OT refers to the singing of songs by farmers as they return home from the field with sheaves on their shoulders (Ps. 126: 5f.). When rulers succeeded in devastating their foes' territories, they used to boast that they made the harvest songs cease; e. g., "I deprived his (country's) commons of human voices... and the sound of the sweet *alāla* songs" (i. e., harvest songs. For the text, cf. *The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, I/1 (Chicago, 1964, p. 328). For a discussion, cf. A. L. Oppenheim, "Assyriological Gleanings, IV. A Mesopotamian Harvest Song," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 103 (1946) pp. 11-16.

25. *ANET Sup.*, p. 533.

curses of all times and places embody both covert and overt references to it. The following passage serves to illustrate the various ways in which spiritual salubrity may be lost: "May Mat'ilu become a prostitute, his soldiers women, may they receive (a gift) in the square of the cities²⁶ like any prostitute".²⁷

The three 'curse' themes studied in the foregoing passages occur in the OT as well, which is quite understandable if we but remember that the Israelites, being members of the great Semitic family, shared in its common patterns of thought and expression. An examination of the rich data in the Hebrew Bible cannot be attempted here since the present paper is concerned exclusively with the Psalms.

As far as the Psalms are concerned, we say that in them the idea of sovereignty is seldom met with, for most of these compositions are prayers of ordinary folk who had nothing to do with government, politics and the army. However, it occurs sporadically in the royal psalms; e. g., "May his foes²⁸ bow down before him, and may his enemies lick the dust" (72: 9). The denial of fertility is never conspicuous in the Psalter,²⁹ though traces of it may be found in texts that refer to such things as "the untimely birth that never sees the sun" (58: 8).

The principal theme of curses in the Psalms is the denial of both physical and spiritual salubrity. In the following passages physical well-being in its most comprehensive sense is involved: "Let death³⁰ come upon them; let them go down into Sheol alive; let them go away in terror to their graves" (55: 15);

26. That is, in public, in the open.

27. *ANET Sup.*, p. 533.

28. Literally, "those who dwell in the wilderness," i. e. demons and wild beasts; the king's foes are likened to them.

29. A most conspicuous example is furnished by Hos. 9:11-14: "... no birth, no pregnancy, no conception! Even if they bring up children, I will bereave them till none is left... Give them, O Lord... a miscarrying womb and dry breasts."

30. What is here meant is premature death, death in the full bloom or exuberance of one's life.

"O God, break the teeth in their mouths; tear out the fangs of young lions, O Lord! Let them vanish like water that runs away; like grass let them be trodden down and wither. Let them be like the snail which dissolves into slime" (58: 6-8).³¹ The clearest example of the denial of spiritual salubrity is furnished by the oft-repeated prayer that the foe be covered with shame; e. g., "Let all my enemies... be put to shame in a moment" (6: 11); "Let the wicked be put to shame, let them go dumb-founded to Sheol" (31: 18): "Let them be put to dishonour... and confusion... Let them be clothed with shame and dishonour" (35: 4, 26). The following text is quite remarkable: "Show me a sign of thy favour, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame" (87: 17).³² These and similar expressions are to be interpreted in the light of the fact that in the Orient (both ancient and modern) loss of face is the greatest evil imaginable, and people prefer death to dishonour, shame and the like.³³ It now remains for us to investigate the theological significance - the positive value - of the curses in the Psalter.

III

For a positive evaluation of curses, considered above all as a literary genre of the ancient Orient, we have to bear in

-
31. Here we have a popular conception of the Hebrews: they thought that snails that slipped away so easily from the hand dissolved into slime!
 32. An excellent parallel to this petition is furnished by a 15th-century letter from Canaan addressed to the Pharaoh of Egypt: "Let the king, our lord, listen to the words of his faithful servant and give a present to his servant, while our enemies lick dust..." (Text cited from S. A. B. Mercer, *The Tell El-Amarna Tablets* (2 vols. Toronto, 1939), Letter no. 100, lines 3-38).
 33. Until quite recently boys in India occasionally used to commit suicide when they happened to fail in the annual exams; failure meant for them loss of face with parents, relatives and neighbours, which is something unbearable. We have to view the Hebrew ways of thought against the background of this typically eastern mentality.

mind the fact that they were intended by their authors as an efficacious means of safe-guarding law and order (righteousness in its most pregnant sense) in the world of men. The curses we have cited from non-biblical sources frequently make appeals to the gods to inflict all the evils mentioned in them on miscreants who in any way go counter to the norms of righteousness. And even when the gods are not invoked, the presupposition is that the word of malediction, by reason of the intrinsic virtue that it possesses³⁴ will naturally find fulfilment and afflict the violator of the order of righteousness in the world.³⁵ Curses, as has already been noted, have a preventive end in view, and that which they actively and effectively endeavour to prevent is, in the final analysis, a violation of law and order in the cosmos; viewed thus maledictions as a genre of antiquity acquire a positive significance.

The imprecations in the Psalms are therefore a means ordained to the maintenance of righteousness in all its forms, which has its origin, validity and binding force in Yahweh's holy will as made known to the nation of Israel. No human sanctions are potent enough to restrain sinful man from the tendency to go counter to the order established by the Lord, so that it becomes necessary to make appeal to the working of his own superhuman power.

Furthermore a legal concept that was taken for granted in the ancient world has made its impact felt upon the genre of curse: the principle of law that commensurate, proportionate punishment should be inflicted upon the offender, a punishment

34. Cf. our study, " 'Word' in the traditions of Mesopotamia and Egypt," *Jeevadhara* 1 (1971) pp. 169-75.

35. Prof. Gevirtz makes a distinction between biblical and non-biblical sources: in the latter the gods are almost always invoked, and it is they who have to bring the maledictions to fulfilment, but in the OT, where curses in the strict sense are introduced by the passive participle *'ārūr* ("be accursed") without the invocation of the divine name, the authors rely on the intrinsic power of the spoken word (cf. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, I, p. 750).

that must never exceed the culprit's guilt,³⁶ but which should not go by default either. Accordingly when the Code of Hammurabi gives the injunction "eye for an eye," "bone for a bone," and "tooth for a tooth,"³⁷ what is actually involved here is a preoccupation with the safeguarding of the norms of equity and justice: compensatory injury, when inflicted as punishment, should not sin by excess.³⁸ Another legal principle was that the unjust accuser must receive the punishment that would have befallen the accused if he were found guilty. This is clear, for example, from the following provision of the Code of Hammurabi: if a free citizen accused another free citizen of the crime of black magic but failed to prove his accusation, he must be put to death.³⁹

An identical conception of justice underlies many an imprecation in the Psalms; e. g., "Make them bear their guilt. O God; let them fall by their own counsels" (5: 11); "May his mischief return upon his head; and on his pate may his violence descend" (7: 17);⁴⁰ "He makes a pit, digging it out; may he

-
36. It is to safeguard this aspect of justice that the OT allows only 39 lashes to be administered when the maximum prescribed is 40 (Dt. 25: 3. 2 Cor. 11:24); there was always the danger of miscount!
37. For the sake of those who are not acquainted with the text of Hammurabi's law, we add here the three relevant paragraphs: "If a seignior has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye" (§196); "If he has broken another seignior's bone, they shall break his bone" (§197); "If a seignior has knocked out a tooth of a seignior of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth" (§200) (cf. *ANET*, p. 175).
38. Such is also the sense of the law of compensatory retaliation (*lex talionis*) in the OT (Ex. 21: 23-25). In the NT, for polemical reasons, this legal prescription is interpreted in a quite different way (Mt. 5: 38-39).
39. This is the first "canon" in the Code of Hammurabi.
40. According to the OT God causes the iniquity of the wicked to fall back upon their heads; thus Abimelek who cut off

fall into the hole which he has made" (7: 16). In these and similar instances the Psalmists are praying that their foes' malice may act as a boomerang, so that adequate justice may be dispensed to all the parties concerned. Such is no doubt the ideological background of the following wish which has scandalized so many Christians: 'O daughter of Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall he be who requites you with what you have done to us! Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock" (137: 8-9)!⁴¹

The observations above are of the utmost importance for a proper understanding and evaluation of the long series of maledictions in Ps. 109: 6-19: the violent and virulent language of this section is intended as a counterweight to the curses pronounced against the author by his malevolent foes; the whole section may even represent the *ipsissima verba* uttered by the enemies, but in any case it is a cry of anguish addressed to God with a view to moving him to dispense justice according to the norms of righteousness.⁴²

On the basis of the fact that the Psalmists at times pray to God to repay their foes sevenfold (cf. 79: 12), the objection may be raised that in these instances at least they trespass the

the heads of his brothers "upon one stone" had his head crushed by an upper millstone thrown by a woman; "and God also made all the wickedness of the men of Shechem fall back upon their heads" (Judg. 9: 53-57).

41. To have a sympathetic understanding of the feelings of hatred that come to expression in Ps. 137, we would do well to remember that the poet had witnessed with his own eyes the total destruction of Jerusalem and the terrible slaughter that accompanied it; he certainly saw how little children, among whom there might have been his own tiny tots, were mercilessly put to death by the Babylonian soldiery. Those who take offence at the poet's words betray a clear lack of understanding of human feelings and their depth.
42. For a discussion, cf. H. - J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (Biblicher Kommentar XV, Naukirchen, 1960), pp. 747-8. A. Weiser, *The Psalms* (Old Testament Library, London, 1962, p. 690.

limits set by strict justice and thus show themselves bloodthirsty and revengeful. Such an accusation, we wish to point out, is not at all valid, for the number seven, which we have already met with in the treaty between KTK and Arpad, denotes above all perfection, so that the psalmist's words become a prayer for the dispensing of justice in all its fulness.⁴³

In the next place it was quite a common custom in antiquity among subjects and vassals, particularly when they were in trouble because of the hostility of their more powerful neighbours, to identify their interests with those of their sovereign and protector. And the suzerain for his part, when he imposed treaties upon his vassals, was wont to demand that they identify their interests with his own. As an example we may cite the following words from the treaty Shuppiluliuma the Hittite emperor already referred to concluded with Niqmandu the ruler or the petty kingdom of Ugarit: "Thus says the Sun,⁴⁴ the Great King: Say to Niqmandu.... Just as formerly your forefathers were friendly with the land of Hatti and not hostile, now may you Niqmandu.... be hostile to my enemy and friendly to my friend."⁴⁵ Here is another text taken from a vassal's letter to his sovereign as his territory was being attacked by foes: "If you abandon Abi-Samar,⁴⁶ then you abandon your own cities.... Perhaps you are saying, 'Abi-Samar is not my son and my estate is not his estate.' But my estate is indeed your estate and Abi-Samar is your son."⁴⁷ The process of identification of interests in the two passages should be obvious to all.

The Psalmists for their part conscious as they were of the fact that they were God's friends, the special objects of his care and solicitude, invariably identified their interests with those of

43. Brongers, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

44. The Hittite rulers appropriated to themselves the title "Sun."

45. This is the vassal's name.

46. For the original text, cf. J. Nougayrol, *Le palais royal d'Ugarit IV. Textes accadiens des archives sud* (Paris, 1956), doc. no. 17. 340 (p. 51).

47. cf. G. Dossin et alii, *Archives royales de Mari, transcrites et traduites*, II (Paris, 1950ff.), let. no. 2.

the Lord, with the result that their personal enemies became the enemies of their God. This process of identification comes to expression in the curses of the Psalter.⁴⁸

Lastly we do well to remember that Orientals generally tend to employ exaggerated forms of speech,⁴⁹ which custom too no doubt made its impact felt on the actual formulation of the maledictions in the OT; if they are so vitriolic and virulent it is because their authors are making use of exaggerated language.

In this connection we must also mention some interesting factors brought to our notice by modern thought. Reality as it exists on the phenomenological level is constituted by the subject-object distinction, but this fact of division necessarily gives rise to tension in all its forms. The subject-object tension, which is something inevitable, unavoidable, necessary, healthy and meaningful, comes to expression in all its horror, for example, in the human attitude known as "staring,"⁵⁰ and the most diabolical form of its concretization may be found in the mentality

48. It also stands in the rear of expressions such as "Do I not hate them that hate thee, O Lord? And do I not loathe them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies" (139: 21-22). This passage clearly shows the untenability of the popular persuasion that the Psalmists hate sin but not the sinner; such a subtle distinction is in fact wholly alien to the thought patterns of ancient Israel. There is no need to hide the truth that the author hates his foes with all the hatred he can command! We must not, however, be scandalized at his attitude, for surprise on our part will, in the final analysis, imply an element of insincerity: We have ourselves been guilty of so many sins against charity! The poet may very well tell us: "Let him who is without sin be the first to throw the stone!"

49. An excellent example is furnished by the language used by the Arab leaders, particularly by Nasser, before the 1967 war: The Jews would be thrown into the sea!

50. This concept has very well been elucidated by Sartre.

that has prompted people to make such statements as *homo homini lupus*, *l'enfer c'est l'autre*, etc. If we bear in mind these attitudes, which are undoubtedly part and parcel of our own most personal and intimate experience, we will be in a position to have a sympathetic understanding of the curses in the Psalms.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that all the imprecations in the OT, inasmuch as they are, in the final analysis, an appeal to God who alone is potent enough to safeguard the order of righteousness, have a positive value. In other words, they are a prayer for the maintenance of righteousness in the world, so that the pious man may be able to live in communion with his lord and master, and as such they are always relevant. They are, as believers will concede without ado, the word of God, but a word that has been historically conditioned, inasmuch as it has been uttered by a particular group of people who lived and wrote at determined time in human history and who also possessed a culture that differed in several respects from the specifically Christian culture we are all acquainted with. It is therefore anything but correct on the part of Christians to take offense at the imprecations in the Psalms or to consider them expressions of an inferior or lower morality which has long since been done away with by our Lord.

Calvary College,
Trichur-4, Kerala.

K. Luke

Prayer in the Life and Teaching of Jesus

At Present, perhaps more than ever before, the Christian is passing through a period of crisis in the matter of prayer. The scope of this article is to examine the teaching of the Gospels about prayer, as reflected in the life and teaching of Jesus. A right understanding of it will clarify the meaning and characteristics of Christian prayer and hence of the role of prayer in christian life.

We divide this treatise into two main parts. The first part will deal with prayer in the life of Jesus. The second will deal with the teaching of Jesus about prayer.

I

Prayer in the Life of Jesus

To the prayers of Jesus we have few references in the Gospels. In the synoptic gospels, apart from the three exclamatory prayers in the Crucifixion narrative, we encounter only two prayers of Jesus. The prayer of jubilation in Mt. 11:25 f and the prayer in Gethsemane in Mk. 14:36 par. The gospel of John adds three more prayers: in the story of Lazarus (11:41 f), in the temple forecourt (12:27 f) and the High-Priestly Prayer (ch. 17.)

Apart from these, there are a number of general references to Jesus' praying, especially to his prayers in solitude¹ and to his words about his prayer for Peter (Lk 22:31 f).

Jesus and the traditional prayers

He was brought up in a devout jewish home (Lk 2), so he must have participated in the liturgical and spiritual heritage of

1. Mk. 1:35; 6:46 par; Mt. 14:23; Lk 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28f

his people. Hence we can have an idea of the prayers which the child Jesus was taught in his parental home, and which accompanied the man Jesus throughout his life. One such prayer is called 'Shema', a creed. It was recited twice a day, in the morning between dawn and sunrise and in the evening after sunset. This is first attested to in the second century B.C. by the letter of Aristaeas². The text recited was the creed of Dt. 6:4-9. It gets the name 'Shema' from the opening words 'Hear, O Israel' of v. 4. All men, and boys from their 12th birthday upwards had to recite the 'Shema' regularly. To recite the shema twice a day was considered the minimum of religious practice³. We can justly conclude that Jesus also was accustomed to this practice.

Particular references to this are not lacking in the Gospels. In Mk. 1:35 we find Jesus at prayer before sunrise: "in the early morning, a great while before the day". After the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus ascends a mountain in the evening to pray (Mk. 6:46) and when Luke related that Jesus continued all night in prayer before the choosing of the 12 Apostles (Lk. 6:12) this is evidently the evening prayer which he extended till dawn. Lk. 10:26 should also be mentioned in connection with the daily morning and evening prayers of Jesus. When Jesus asks the scribe "How do you read?" the word 'read' represents *kara* meaning 'to recite' and the scribe answers with the commandment from the 'Shema' to love God (Dt. 6:5). In effect Jesus takes it for granted that the daily recital of the creed is a common practice. There is a confirmation of it in the report in Mk. 12:29 f. that Jesus answered the question about the greatest commandment not only with the commandment to love God (Dt. 6:5) but in addition, with the preceding verse as well: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord". So accustomed was he to reciting the 'Shema'.

The Jews had also the custom of praying three times a day. It is first attested to in the Book of Daniel 6:11 (cf. also v. 14). Here it is said that Daniel had windows in his upper

2. Cf. J. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, London 1967, p. 68.

3. Cf. J. Jeremias *op. cit.* p. 69

room which opened in the direction of Jerusalem and that he used to kneel down three times a day, to pray, and to praise God⁴.

The first of these three prayers (morning, afternoon and evening) for which we have evidence is the afternoon prayer, recited at 3 p.m. when the daily sacrifice was offered in the temple. The Book of Ezra says, in 9:5, that Ezra uttered his great penitential prayer 'at the evening sacrifice'. In Dan 9:21 it is said that Daniel made his penitential prayer 'at the time of the evening sacrifice'. The same time is mentioned in connection with Judith's prayer (Judith 9:1). In other words, while crowds in the Holy City gathered in the Temple for the offering of the afternoon sacrifice, people outside Jerusalem joined them in prayer.

The prayer said at the three times we have indicated is called 'Tephilla' i.e. the prayer, the Grand Benediction. It is a hymn consisting of a string of benedictions. At the end of the First Century A.D. the number was eighteen, and consequently it was also called the 'Eighteen Benedictions'⁵. To these, the persons who prayed added their private petitions⁶. As we can judge from Acts 3:1; 10:3.30 etc., by New Testament times, the custom of praying three times a day seems to have become a general rule. The recitation of the 'Shema' morning and evening, and of the 'Tephilla' thrice a day with private devotions added on, and the benedictions said before and after meals seem to have formed the framework of education of Jewish youth in prayer at home. It can be taken for granted that Jesus was familiar with them.

Two passages may show how Jesus was also familiar with the time of prayer in the afternoon. Lk 18:9-14 describes two men

-
4. Cf. also Ps. 55:17 where the psalmist says: "Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan and he will hear my voice"
 5. Cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Munchen, 1928, vol. IV, pp. 208-249
 6. Cf. Str. Billerbeck IV, pp. 233f

going up to the temple to pray, probably at the regular hour of prayer in the afternoon. The allusion to the afternoon prayer is even clearer in Mt. 6:5 where Jesus rebukes the hypocrites who pray publicly at the street corner. This happened probably at the time of the afternoon sacrifices in the Temple, when trumpets were loudly sounded from the temple over the city of Jerusalem, to proclaim the hour of prayer⁷.

There is also some indication of the fact that Jesus not only knew, but also observed this afternoon hour of prayer. The first benediction of the 'Tephilla' contains two solemn invocations to God. It runs as follows: "Blessed be thou, Lord... the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob... most high God, master of heaven and earth..."⁸. Jesus, who is ordinarily very sparing in the use of divine names, speaks of God as 'the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (Mk. 12:26 par.) and as 'Lord of heaven and earth' (Mt. 11:25). This two-fold coincidence with the wording of the first benediction of the 'Tephilla' indicates Jesus' familiarity with it. Our conclusion is reinforced by the fact that these two invocations were not in use in Palestinian judaism outside the 'Tephilla'.

Moreover three times of prayer became firmly established in the Early Church. The observance of afternoon prayer in particular is testified to in Acts 3:1. It is quite improbable that the Early Church would have observed the hours of prayer if Jesus had rejected them. There are also passages in the Gospels to show that Jesus joined in the synagogue prayer (Mk. 1, 2: 6:2 etc.) and the customary prayers at home celebrations like those of the Passover (Mk. 14:17-26).

From all this we may conclude in all probability that no day in the life of Jesus passed without prayer at the three prescribed times: the morning prayer at sunrise, the afternoon prayer and the evening prayer at night before going to sleep. We can sense from this something of the hidden inner life of Jesus, something of the source from which he daily drew strength.

7. Cf. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 74

8. Cf. Str. Billerbeck IV p. 211

Jesus differing from the customs in his life of prayer

Once we have appreciated the position of Jesus regarding the traditional forms of prayer, we can appreciate better the life of prayer specific to him.

Jesus spent a long time in prayer

In the first place we notice that Jesus was not content with the pious practice of liturgical or private prayers three times a day. In Mk. 1:35 it is said that 'in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place.' From v. 36 it is clear that he was away for so long a time that Simon and those who were with him noted Jesus' absence and prepared to go in search of him. Mk. 6:46 says: 'And when he had sent them away he departed into a mountain to pray'. Again it must have been a long prayer in solitude. As we see from v. 48, it was only about the fourth watch of the night (3-6 a. m.) that the disciples caught sight of him. In Lk 6:12 the Evangelist says: 'He went up into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God'.

Now it is quite probable that parts of the passages which mention Jesus' prayers are to be attributed to the editing of the Evangelists. Thus Luke repeatedly adds the motif of the praying Lord to the text of Mark⁹. But even so the question remains: What induced Luke to add this motif to the Marcan text? The only answer seems to be the existence of a firmly established tradition about Jesus' prayer by night in solitude. This answer is confirmed by the older tradition describing Jesus praying in Gethsemane (Mk 14:32-42 par.) in the middle of the night, namely outside the regular time of prayer.

Jesus prayed in the native language

Another feature showing Jesus departing from the custom is in the language of prayer. In contrast to the 'Shema' and

9. Cf. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28

'Tephilla' which were recited in Hebrew¹⁰ the invocation of God in Jesus' prayer is the Aramaic term 'Abba'¹¹. The Lord's Prayer that he taught his disciples is also an Aramaic prayer¹². Thus Jesus not only prayed in his native tongue, in his private prayers, but also gave his disciples a formal prayer in the vernacular. In doing so, he seems to remove prayer from the sphere of a 'sacred' language and place it right in the midst of everyday life.

Jesus prayed at critical moments

The Gospels testify that Jesus prayed at critical moments. In Mk 1:35-38 we are told that Jesus retired from Capernaum to pray before announcing his preaching tour. In 6:46 Mark says that Jesus went alone into the hills to pray, after feeding the multitude. From Jn. 6:15 it would appear that it was when the people were about to come and take him by force to make him king that he withdrew to the hills to pray. It was a critical moment endangering the fulfilment of his redeeming mission. In Mk 14:36, 39 he prays in Gethsemane before his arrest and in Mk 15:34 he prays on the Cross. Jesus is found to pray also before great decisions. In Mk 3:13 he prays before the appointment of the twelve, in Mk 6:32 after their return from their mission, and in Mk 9:2 before the Transfiguration.

Jesus' prayer: action oriented prayer

It is clear that prayer, as a distinct occupation, had a large place in the life and activity of Jesus. He was seen entering into prayer and emerging from it. It was at the end of one such occasion, which certainly struck the apostles, that they asked him to teach them to pray and he taught them the 'Our Father' (Lk 11:1-2)¹³. Praying seems to have formed a notable part of his activity (Lk 5:15-16).

10. Cf. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 76.

11. Mk 14:36; Mt 6:9; Lk 23:34, 46 etc.

12. This is clear from the terms 'debts' (*opheilema*) and 'debtors' (*opheilein*) which are typical Aramaisms

13. Cf. D. Coggan, *The Prayers of the New Testament*, London 1967 pp. 18-19

When the Evangelists thus bring out an element that they consider important in the life of Jesus, it is evident, from the context in which they put these hours of prolonged prayer, that they saw them as inseparable from the activity taking up all Jesus' time, namely, the proclamation of the Gospel. Not one of the prayers of Jesus can be considered as an 'escape to God', a time of intimacy the Son had recourse to, in order to forget his work and relish the presence of his Father. Every time that Jesus prayed, it was because an important event was at hand, or taking place. For this event to bear fruit, he had to accompany it, or usher it in, with prayer.

St Luke is the most attentive in observing the importance of prayer in Jesus' conduct, and it is in his Gospel that the close link between prayer and activity is most manifest. Jesus stood praying at the time of his baptism, when the Father invested him with the Holy Spirit and sent him forth as the servant of God charged with the task of taking away the sins of the world, and as his Son for men to see and here (Lk 3:21-22). When after his prayer he was overtaken by Peter and his companions, his first words were, "Let us go to the next country towns, so that I can preach there too, for that is why I came out" (Mk 1:38). Jesus was at prayer when the glory of God transfigured him, and at the same time designated him as destined to meet death in Jerusalem (Lk 9:28-31). It was through prayer that Jesus obtained for Peter, in his temptation and fall, the gift of repentance and fidelity (Lk 22:32). Jesus prayed at the hour when he entered upon his passion (Lk 22:41; Jo 17). On every occasion prayer was inseparable from his mission and the actions he had to accomplish¹⁴.

The above picture of the prayer-life of Christ argues against the two possible extremes in the matter of prayer. One is the tendency to reduce or leave out prayer for reasons of efficiency and in order to replace it by generous action. The other tendency is to find shelter from duties and the harsh realities of life by pursuing so-called spiritual consolations. Both these tendencies

14. Cf. J. Guillet, *Jesus Christ Yesterday and Today*, London, 1965 p. 112

fail to do justice to Christ's way of praying and hence also to Christian prayer as seen in the Gospel setting.

The content of Jesus' prayer

As Jesus practised it, prayer breaks through the confines of religious custom, above all in content. The prayers of Jesus in all the four gospels have this in common: except for the cry on the Cross, where the invocation is taken from Ps 22:1, they all invoke God as Father¹⁵. The fact that this is attested to in all the Gospel traditions shows how firmly this mode of address was rooted in the tradition of Jesus. It is also to be noted that Jesus used the Aramaic word 'Abba', when he addressed God as Father (cf. Mk. 14:36). Though it does not occur in the other gospel texts, the use of it by the Greek-speaking Churches¹⁶ reflects Jesus' frequent and ordinary recourse to the term.

There is no analogy at all in all the literature of Jewish prayer for the practice of addressing God as 'Abba', and this is true not only of fixed liturgical prayers, but of free private prayer, of which many examples have been handed down to us in Talmudic Literature¹⁷. We are thus confronted with a fact of utmost significance. Whereas there is not a single instance of God's being addressed as 'Abba' in the literature of Jewish prayer, Jesus always addressed him in this way.

In the time of Jesus, 'Abba' was a colloquial and familiar form of address. To the Jewish mind it would have been disrespectful and therefore inconceivable to address God thus. For Jesus to venture to take this step was something new and unheard of. Jesus' use of 'Abba' reveals the heart of his relationship with God. It is not only an expression of the familiarity he uses in speaking with God but of his relationship to God as Son to Father.

In Mt. 11:25-27 Jesus thanked the Father that he himself was his only begotten Son, that he belonged to him alone, that he

15. Cf. Mk 14:36; Mt 6:9; 11:25-26 Lk 23:34, 46; Mt 26:42; Jn 11:41; 12:27f; 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25

16. Cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6

17. Cf. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 57

(the Father) could be really known by him alone, that he alone could share intimate union with the Father wholly and exclusively and that in him the Father throws open to little ones the unfathomable riches of this incommunicable sonship.

In Jn 11:41-42 we see the same consciousness in Jesus of being in the presence of his Father, and of being the only one to have full knowledge of him. He is conscious of holding and expecting all from his Father, with no shadow of uncertainty. He gives thanks above all because he has been able to bring to men the revelation of the Father who sent him.

In Jn 17, the priestly prayer of Jesus at the supreme moment when he prayed for the fruitfulness of his life and death and for the future of all his work, expresses also his unshakable assurance of his union with the Father. The core of Jesus' prayers is his consciousness of being the Son and knowing his Father quite intimately, knowing exactly all that his Father wished and accomplishing it in every detail. The echo of this consciousness we hear in his prayer in Gethsemane: "Father, only as thy will is, not as mine is" (Mk 14:36).

The priestly prayer of Jesus formed the very heart of the Passion and expressed the depth of it. What took place at this hour was the encounter of Father and Son, beyond all the outrages and tortures to which Jesus was subjected. It was an encounter in the form of an entreaty, laden with all the sufferings of the Passion, but taking on the nature of a thanksgiving: 'I have achieved the task you gave me to do... I have made your name known to them.. None of them has been lost... This is my desire that they may be with me where I am...' (Jn 17). This was an encounter in perfect intimacy between Father and Son, but also embracing the whole Church which was brought into the heart of this intimate union.

II

Prayer in the Teaching of Jesus

Christian prayer: prayer of the children of God

Jesus not only lived a life of prayer but also taught his disciples to pray. "When you pray, go into your room and shut

the door and pray to your father who is (there) in secret; and your father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt 6:6). The first thing Jesus says about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount is meant to remind the disciples of its objective, the Father. He does not tell them of the need of praying. He takes it for granted, so obvious is it to his way of thinking¹⁸. No new formula is prescribed, no particular method; he leaves it to them to use the framework of prayer in which, as Jews, they had been brought up. The important point is not so much what is prayed for. The gospel sometimes suggests that we can ask God for anything we like even the moving of a mountain. On the other hand it sometimes seems to want us to forget all our own concerns and think only of the Kingdom of God. The one essential thing is that prayer should put us in the presence of the Father. 'When you pray...pray to your Father who is there', and because he is there, and hears and sees and knows our prayer. This is bound to be a secret thing between him and us, a silent surrender of ourselves to him. There is the realization and feeling that we are God's children, in the presence of the Father, experiencing the vital bond between Father and children. It would not be enough for us to know that God is a father, unless we realize we are his children.

Jesus alone can invite us to his Father's home and bring us into his presence there. It is by his own prayer that he has ensured that this will really happen. It is the very revelation of his own soul, a soul always in prayer. Because he himself was at prayer in the presence of the Father, Jesus was able also to let us know the response he received from him. For prayer means listening as well as speaking, receiving as well as offering. In the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount about prayer, the Father is always portrayed as welcoming the prayers of his children and responding to them: 'your Father who sees you' (Mt 6:4, 18); 'your Father who is there to hear you' (Mt 6:6, 18); 'your father knows what you need before you ask him' (Mt 6:8); 'your heavenly Father knows that you need them all' (Mt 6:32); 'your heavenly Father also will forgive you' (Mt 6:14); 'how

18. Note that he says to the disciples not 'pray', but 'when you pray'

much more will your Father give' (Mt 7:11). Jesus sees the Father as attentive to the needs of his children foreseeing their requests, and ever watchful for them to look up to him so that he may see himself reflected in their eyes.

Christian Prayer: The Lord's prayer

Jesus' teaching on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount is summed up in the 'Our Father' which also forms a summary of Jesus' own prayer. In giving the 'Our Father' he was giving the substance of his own prayer: Our Father who art in heaven—Father of Christ' Jesus; Hallowed be thy name—as he had dedicated himself to its glory (Jn 12:28); Thy kingdom come—as he looked forward to it; Thy will be done—as he wished to achieve it (Lk 22:42); Give us this day our daily bread—as he accepted it from his Father's hands; Forgive us our trespasses—as he prayed to his Father for forgiveness (Lk 23:34); Lead us not into temptation—as he warned us and prayed for us to avoid it (Lk 22:31-32); Deliver us from evil—as he prayed we might be delivered (Jn 17:11,15)¹⁹.

The specific Christian character of the 'Lord's Prayer' is clear also from the context in which Jesus gave it to his disciples: He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples' (Lk 11:1). The reference to John the Baptist is significant. In the time of Jesus individual religious groups had each its own distinctive, 'prayer' customs and forms. This was true of the Pharisees and the Essenes as well as of the disciples of John. A particular custom in prayer, expressed the particular relationship with God which bound the individuals together. The request in Lk 11:1 shows, therefore, that Jesus' disciples recognized themselves as a community of the age of salvation and that they requested of Jesus a prayer, which would bind them together and identify them, in that it would give expression to their chief concern. The Lord's Prayer is the clearest and richest summary of Jesus' proclamation which we possess. It would serve as the model for Christian prayers.

19. Cf. J. Guillet, *Jesus Christ yesterday and today*, London 1965 p. 216

The Lord's Prayer is to be understood above all in the background of the teaching of Jesus centered on the Kingdom that comes. The primary orientation is eschatological. All the demands in the Lord's Prayer are concerned in one way or another with the coming of the Kingdom.

The tenor of the Lord's Prayer in Mt and Lk²⁰ is not absolutely identical. Both present the Prayer as it was used in the Palestinian Church and the Gentile Church respectively. We cannot know with real certitude, which of the two recensions is closer to Jesus' own version. Perhaps we should prefer the text of Mt, as it has a better structure. Its language is more faithful to the Jewish language of Jesus' time and hence there is greater likelihood that it contains the authentic words of Jesus²¹. It has a remarkable structure consisting of an invocation to the heavenly Father, three petitions in relation to God (your name, your kingdom, your will) and three petitions in relation to man (give us, forgive us, deliver us). The prayer resumes the essential themes of Revelation that occupy the OT, preserved in the Jewish piety and brought to fulfilment in the NT.

'Our Father who art in heaven'

God began to reveal himself as the Father through his saving activity in Israel: the deliverance of Israel, his first-born son, from slavery in Egypt²², the giving of Israel existence as the people of God through the covenant,²³ and his announcement of his tender love for the people through the Prophets²⁴. When they were unfaithful he called them back as his children (Jer. 3:14f). But the peculiarly Christian character of this invocation is given by Christ. Though during his lifetime Jesus keeps the distinction between 'my Father' and 'your Father', after his Resurrection, he closely associates the two (Jo 20:17).

22. Cf. Mt 6:9-13 and Lk 11:2-4

21. Cf. D. E. Jacquemin, 'La Prière du Seigneur' in *Assemblées du Seigneur*, 48 (1965), p. 48

22. Exod 4:22; cf. Si 36:11 etc.

23. Dt 32:6

24. Jer 31:20; Os 11:3

From that time onwards he associates the believers with himself in his risen life and in his condition of being the Son, thus giving us his own filial Spirit and life, so that we can call God 'Abba, Father' just as he did (Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:6). This profound Christian reality is expressed in the invocation of the Lord's Prayer.

'Hallowed be your name!'

Since according to the Semitic way of thinking the name stands for the person, it is the Father himself who is to be sanctified. This sanctification should be effected by God and man. The Biblical tradition is quite clear as regards this double theme. God sanctifies himself (his name) by manifesting his sanctity²⁵. Man sanctifies (glorifies) God, by acknowledging his sanctity in worship and adoration, and in obedience and fidelity to the demands of God²⁶. God manifests his sanctity practically by communicating it, by making others share in it, and man acknowledges the sanctity of God by making himself conform to the will of God²⁷. When Israel violated the will of God, the prophets gave it the new Messianic orientation. Ez. 36:23 f says: I will sanctify my great name... which you have profaned among them (the nations)²⁸. With this Messianic orientation, the sanctification of the Name of God is concretely identified with the 'coming of the Kingdom'. Though the NT does not speak directly of the sanctification of the divine name, it shows how in the Church the effusion and the glorification of the divine sanctity is realized through the mediation of Christ and the transforming presence of his spirit²⁹.

'Your Kingdom Come!'

This coincides with the essential objects of the message and the work of Christ. For the contemporaries of Jesus it meant

25. Num 20:13; Ez 28:22, 25; 38:16, 23; 39:27

26. Num 27:14; Dt. 32:51; Is 8:13; 29:23

27. Cf. Lev. 11:14 'Be holy, because I am holy; also Lev 22:31f

28. Cf. also Is 29:23; Ez 20:41; 28:22-26; 38:23; 39:25-29

29. Cf. Jn 17:19; Eph 5:26; Heb 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29, 13:12;

Jn 15:8

not only the universal acknowledgement of the kingship or sovereignty of God but also the fulness of the gifts of the Messianic age. Hence such expressions as 'receive', 'possess', 'seek', the Kingdom etc. The Kingdom of God has already come, with the coming of the Messiah. The miracles are signs of it. But as the parables of the kingdom (Mt ch. 13) show it is only in seed. It should grow slowly and progressively into a big tree, 'producing fruit a hundredfold and reaching its eschatological perfection. Though it is essentially a gift of God, it required also man's collaboration for its growth (Mt 13: 21,43). It is this eschatological perfection of the kingdom that is prayed for in the Lord's prayer.

'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'

The primordial object of the will of God revealed definitely in the New Testament is in a word, 'our Salvation'³⁰ which includes our sonship, our sanctification and the gift of the kingdom or eternal life³¹. Eph 1:3f expresses it well: "Blessed be the God...who...chose us...that we should be holy... he destined us ... to be his sons...according to the purpose of his will...for he has made known to us...the mystery of his will." It is this divine will, that is in the course of fulfilment, and it is this fulfilment that is prayed for in the third petition. Here again man's co-operation is required i. e. filial obedience to his will. God is sanctified, if we open ourselves to the effusion of his sanctity. The kingdom realizes itself in the measure in which we receive it effectively in our hearts. The Divine will of salvation is fulfilled if we make it ours by an obedient adherence to it. The example of such a prayer is Jesus himself. In Gethsemane he prayed 'Let thy will be done' (Mt 26:42) and made his will conform to the divine will.

'Give us today our daily bread'

The 'daily bread', for the Early Christians, was a classical symbol of the gifts of God. It contains also the sum-total of the

30. Cf. 1 Tim 2:4

31. Cf. Jo 6:39f; Mt 18:14; and already in Ez 18:23, 32; 33:11

temporal goods indispensable for the subsistence of man. But the Bible sees in it always the gift of God, a divine reward crowning our labour. Asking for it unceasingly in prayer, we learn to be as children, expecting everything, from God the Father (cf Mt. 7:9). Asking for our 'daily bread' we become the poor who seek above all the kingdom of God, without anxiety about tomorrow, believing firmly in the providence of the Father³². Asking for it for 'us' in the plural refers to the fraternal disposition arising spontaneously in the hearts of children of the same father. In the Bible, bread is often the sign and also means of communion, intimacy and fraternity. The children of God praying for 'daily bread' cannot forget their innumerable brethren all over the world for whom daily bread is an object of a permanent anxiety.

In the eschatological context of the Lord's Prayer, the bread would probably recall the Exodus of the people of God marching towards the Promised Land and nourished daily by their God³³. The early Christians were conscious of their condition of being the people of God, the eschatological Messianic community marching towards the eschatological kingdom of God. On this journey it is Christ, the true bread of life come down from heaven, that becomes the nourishment for the believers through his Revelation and the Eucharist (Jn 6). This becomes also the object of this petition in the Lord's prayer.

'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors'

This petition regarding the forgiveness of sins is made up of the Jewish vocabulary which expresses rather the juridical aspect of sin, speaking of it in terms of a debt. This does not mean that the aspect of personal offence against God in sin is neglected. This aspect is quite remarkable both in the OT and NT. Disobedience of the will of God goes against not only the sovereignty or the rights of God, but also against the love of God the Father³⁴. The most important oracles referring to the Messianic

32. Mt 6:25-34 par

33. Exod 16:4; Ps 78:24f; 105:40; Wisd 16:20

34. Jer 2:2f; 3:7f; Ez 16:23; Os 1-3 etc.

35. Jer 31:34; Ez 16:60-63; 36:23f etc.

restoration, speak of abolishing debts, effacing sin and purifying man entirely³⁵. The message of Jesus is also clear on this point. It proclaims the merciful love that moves the heart of the Father to pardon offences and to save what is lost³⁶. The very life and death of Jesus was a manifestation of it³⁷.

But God's forgiveness of sins extends so far as to transform our hearts and to diffuse in them the charity of God manifested in Christ. This pardon does not reach us efficaciously unless and until we let ourselves be led by the divine merciful love. It reaches us only in the measure in which we forgive others their offences against us. Hence Jesus' demand of pardoning love – the love of one's enemies – so that we may become children of the heavenly Father (Mt. 5:43f)³⁸.

Do not bring us to the test, but deliver us from the Evil One'

The word *Peirasmos* (temptation) literally means 'trial' in a broader sense. In the OT we see God sending trials to his elect: Abraham (Gen. 22: 1) the Israelites (Exod. 15: 25) and the just (Wisd 3: 5). As one purifies gold in a crucible³⁹ the Lord permits or even provokes such situations in which the purity of our faith is ascertained. When it is carried to the point of the risk of sin, then it becomes temptation and it is attributed to the devil or to our concupiscence, because 'God tempts no one' (Jam 1: 13). It is with this temptation of which the author is the Evil One, that the petition deals. 'Do not lead' is to be understood in the permissive sense of allowing to fall. We cannot ask to be exempted from trials. The whole of Scripture witnesses to the necessity of it, to its purifying role. The very life of Jesus is an example of it⁴⁰, of temptations to deviate to a temporal messianism from that of the suffering servant.

36. Mt 18 : 11-14; Lk 15

37. Mt 9 : 10-13, Lk 7 : 36-50; 19 : 1-10: 23 : 34

38. Cf, also the parable of the merciful servant in Mt 18 : 23-35

39. Wisd 3 : 6; Ps 66 : 10

40. Mt 4 : 1f; 16 : 22f; 26 : 36f

The Biblical Apocalypse foresees, in the last days before God's final intervention, a strengthening of the forces of evil, which threaten our separation from God (Mt. 24: 4f). In the eschatological context of the Lord's Prayer, this seems to be specially envisaged in the clause under consideration. But it refers to our present trials and temptations in as far as these are anticipations of that final trial. Jesus experienced them in his life and came out victoriously. Christians ask for the same outcome in their lives.

The Lord's Prayer asks for the realization of the Kingdom together with whatever explicates it or subordinates itself to it. The Prayer constitutes the sum total of the message of Jesus, as lived by the early Church. The first three petitions show the profound reality of the Kingdom as consisting in our incorporation into Christ whereby we become children of God, a relationship expressed in prayer. The last three petitions go to create in us the heart of a child of God before the Father. The Lord's Prayer is the prayer, par excellence, of Christians moving towards the eschatological fulfilment of the history of salvation, when the children of God will be definitively associated with the Son of God in praising the Heavenly Father,

The above analysis shows that all Christian prayer should be related to the Kingdom of God. Even the words of Jesus in Lk. 11: 9 'Ask, and it will be given you: seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you' which sound so absolute and universal are finally reduced to the Holy Spirit as the one object of prayer (Lk. 11: 13).

Prayer for personal needs

Does this mean that the Christian may not pray for his personal needs? The very petition in the Lord's Prayer 'Give us today our daily bread' shows that we can, but also on what conditions. One cannot reduce the petition to individual needs, isolating it from the petitions before and after it. When we reckon up the objects of prayer given in the teaching of Jesus, we are surprised at their fewness and how they converge. The objects are 'what is good' (Mt 7: 11), 'the Holy Spirit' (Lk 11: 13), 'for those who persecute you' (Mt 5: 44), 'casting out evil

spirits' (Mk 9: 28), 'labourers for the harvest' (Lk 10: 2), 'that you may not enter into temptation' (Mt 26: 41). Every object here is within the framework of the 'Our Father' and the Kingdom of God.⁴¹

The Christian's prayer does not exclude any human needs, but puts them all in their right setting, in a community wherein all feel solidarity in their concern for the welfare of all others, wherein there reigns, if not a cloudless unity, a lasting solicitude to overcome all divisions in a spirit of forgiveness, wherein the overriding desire is for the accomplishment of the Father's will and the coming of his kingdom of holiness.

Prayer and Faith

Prayer according to the teaching of Jesus involves waiting, because it is prayer with faith. He made this clear, when he compared it to the persistent appeals of people in dire straits and anguish (Lk 11: 5-13). This is clear also when we see how his miracles came often in response to prolonged and intensified appeal. In the case of Jairus, Jesus allows his faith to pass through the extra test of being told that all was over and it was too late now. Jesus' reaction was: "No need to fear; Thou hast only to believe" (Mk 5: 36). All depended on this faith, and this is what Jesus wanted to foster. Such was his concern also in the cases of the father of the lunatic boy, the Canaanite woman, the sisters of Lazarus, and his own mother at Cana. The waiting he imposed on their request was intended to transform it into prayer and perseverance in faith. He wants us to realize that he wishes to give us his very self in his gifts. If he granted all our desires as fast as we expressed them, we would be like babes, never bothering about him once our end was served. His delay is only a better way for him to hear us by revealing himself to us such as he really is. Hence it is not enough to say a prayer once, no matter how much we mean it. There is the need for persistence. It must become a prayer of real faith.

41. Cf. J. Guillet, *op. cit.* p. 113

Prayer in time of Trial

In Lk 22:31 Jesus says to Simon: "Behold Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail". In Mt 26:41 he says: "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation." Prayer is often accompanied by trial, but it is also the believer's way of overcoming trials. Faith does not know itself till it has experienced trial, and it is only in trial that faith begins to realize in whom it is putting its trust. This is manifested in the very life of Jesus. After his prayerful reception of Baptism and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert to experience loneliness and temptation⁴². When he went into solitude and prayer at Gethsemane, it was in order to encounter his adversary. At the same time only prayer can preserve us from succumbing to temptations. When the apostles, unable to watch and pray, fell asleep, and were powerless to withstand the terrifying presence of Satan, it was their Master's prayer that guarded them.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Whether it be Jesus' own prayer or the prayer he seeks in us, it has one permanent feature. The centre that gives it direction and force is something both divine and this-worldly: God's work, his ways, his will. Hence the prayer that emerges as thanksgiving⁴³. This is the highest form of prayer in the gospel. It is far more than saying 'Thank you'. It is joy and admiration at what God has done. It is far more than a human reaction. It is an inspiration from on high which seizes the creature at the showing forth of God's glory. This is especially noticeable in the gospel of Luke, who is the most alive to it and is the most quick to point out the reactions that go with prayer. The witnesses of the miracles of Jesus are filled with admiration, and they go off praising God. The shepherds of Bethlehem, Simon and Anna make themselves heralds of the tidings of great joy

42. Mk 1, 12-13; Mt 4 : 1

43. Cf. J. Guillet, *op. cit.* p. 119

at the mystery of Christ. Elizabeth and John the Baptist burst forth in joy at the presence of the mystery of Christ. Mary's absolute acceptance of the divine will is at the same time perfect rejoicing in God's work. The very prayer of Jesus recorded in his gospel is a prayer of thanksgiving.⁴⁴

The prayer of thanksgiving does not make man indifferent to the world; it makes him see the revelation of God's glory in the very midst of the world. The *Magnificat*, the expression of pure praise, looks on the marvels wrought by the Lord for his human creatures and on the salvation he brings to the hungry and little ones throughout the world⁴⁵. It is with the same joy that Jesus contemplated the divine glory, seeing it at work in the midst of the world on the least privileged, and in the ineffable exchanges linking the three divine persons in the Trinity. Such is also the Christian's thanksgiving. He is a child of God the Father, sharing the joy of the Son, with the focus of his love, praise and thanksgiving in God. But it is on earth among men, in the midst of the Church with all her troubles and hopes, that he must give expression to it.

Conclusion

From the above analysis of Prayer in the life and teaching of Jesus, one point becomes clear. If the teaching of Jesus on prayer was simply the outcome and extension of his life of prayer, the prayer of the Christian ought to be an extension of the prayer of Christ. The characteristic prayer of the Christian, the 'Our Father' almost repeats the terms of our Lord's prayer. There is the same concern for the Father's name and his glory, pre-occupation with his Kingdom and the fulfilment of his will, and the desire for unity among brethren and for their preservation from evil. Our prayer is our Lord's Prayer, coming from the bottom of his heart. Just as the prayer of Jesus expressed not only his soul and his sentiments but also all he does and all that he is, so the prayer of the Christian must be the expression

44. Cf. Lk 10: 21-22

45. Lk 1: 46-55

of what he is, – a child of God, living for His glory, and doing His will. As in the case of Jesus, in the life of the Christian there should be both prayer and effective service as inseparable aspects of the same thing. If it does not lead to action, the Christian's prayer may be only an illusion; on the other hand without prayer his action will be only a natural urge for activity. In prayer the Christian puts before God the Father all he does from one end of the day to the other. His prayer is his life itself, received from the hands of the Father and lived out as it comes, in the joy of consecrating it wholly to Him in return.

St Thomas Ap. Seminary
Kottayam-10

Mathew Vellanickal

Prayer in the Primitive Church

This article is an attempt to study the nature and characteristics of prayer in the primitive Church.¹ The period covered by this paper includes apostolic and subapostolic times. As charity served as the bond that united the early believers among themselves, so prayer, enlivened by charity, of course, functioned as the principle that united them to their God. It is from the letters of Paul that we get a rather detailed idea of the life of prayer of the early Church. Constant reference will, therefore, be made to the Pauline corpus without any regard to the distinction between *proto-* and *deutero-* Pauline writings.

Time, Place and Manner of the Primitive Church's Prayer

The prayer of the primitive Church was inspired by her actual encounter with Jesus, the risen and glorified one who continued to be operative in her midst through his Spirit. The disciples were deeply impressed by the religious consciousness and utter dependence upon God that Jesus manifested all through his earthly life.² At times he took them along with him to lonely places (Mk 6: 31), and during moments of crisis

-
1. For a detailed synthesis, cf. H. Greeven, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, II, pp. 775-808; G. Spicq, *Théologie morale du Nouveau Testament*, I (Paris, 1965), pp. 355-69; H. Zimmermann, "Prayer", *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology*, II, pp. 681-86. Cf. too J. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London, 1967). M. Meinertz, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, II (Bonn, 1950). F. Prat, *Theology of St Paul*, II (London, 1927). E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* (London, 1955). An exhaustive study is furnished by A. Hamman, *La prière. I. Le Nouveau Testament* (Paris, 1959).
 2. On the place of prayer in the life and teaching of Jesus, cf. the preceding study by Dr Vellanickal.

he asked them to keep awake and pray earnestly (Mk 14: 38). Though he had taught them to pray at all times (Lk 18: 1) he, nonetheless, used to set apart special periods for private and personal prayer (Mk 1: 35). We also find that he took part in the synagogal service on Sabbath days (Mk 1: 21; 3: 1, etc.). Like him, the apostles and the first Christians continued the custom of private and public prayer.

It was customary among the Jews of the post-exilic period to pray three times a day. Daniel, it is said, had windows in his upper room that opened in the direction of Jerusalem, and that he got up to pray three times a day, viz, morning, afternoon and evening (Dan 6: 10). The custom of turning toward the holy city (1 Kg 8: 44) or the Holy Land (1 Kg 8: 48) arose no doubt during the period of the Babylonian exile, but prayer during fixed hours of the day is certainly a much older usage. Dt 11: 19 commands that the *Shema*³ be recited when one lies down and when one arises, that is, in the evening and in the morning. We do not know when exactly the three periods of prayer came to be fixed, but the usage is taken for granted by the Qumran texts.⁴

When we turn to the primitive Church, we find that the three hours of prayer had become a firmly established practice.⁵ The book of Acts refers twice to prayer at the ninth hour, namely, about 3 p. m. which was also the time of sacrifice in the temple (Ex 29: 39. Lev 6: 20); thus Peter and John went up "to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (3: 1); and Cornelius kept the ninth hour of prayer in his house (10: 30). Paul says that he prays continually and asks his readers to do so (1 Thes 3: 10. Eph 6: 18). When the Apostle remarks that he prays always, we should think not only of

3. This is a Hebrew verbal form in the imperative mood and means "Hear". It is the word with which Dt. 6: 4-9 begins. This passage (together with Dt. 11:13-21 and Num. 15:37-41) formed the very core of Jewish prayer and faith.

4. Cf. H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran* (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 223.

5. Cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

uninterrupted prayer but also of his fidelity to the usual hours of prayer.

The first believers did not confine their prayer to the hours prescribed by Jewish usage. Peter, for example, prayed about the sixth hour (Acts 10: 9), i.e. about noon, the usual Roman time for luncheon. And the Jerusalem Church prayed at night for the Apostle Peter who had been imprisoned by Herod (Acts 12: 5, 12). Paul and Silas praised God in prison at midnight (Acts 16: 25). We learn too that vigils were often kept at night (Acts 20: 7 f).⁶ The first believers, then, used to pray not only at fixed hours but also whenever there arose any need or when the Spirit moved them.

Even after their conversion to the new faith, the temple remained the place of prayer for the first Christians (Acts 2: 46; 5: 42). In going there to pray, they were only continuing the custom they used to follow as Jews. The believers used to assemble in private homes as well. Thus after Christ's ascension the disciples were staying in an upper room and were engaged in prayer (Acts 1: 13 f). Homes belonging to any member of the community could serve as gathering places (Acts 2: 46; 5: 42), and one such private home specially mentioned in Acts is the house of Mary the mother of John who was also known as Mark (12: 12). The community that gathered in private homes (e.g., in the house of Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus [1 Cor 16: 19], and in Rome [Rom 16: 5], and in the house of Philemon [5: 2]) is designated by Paul as the Church that is in that home. And it is evident that these houses served as places of public and private prayer. An interesting detail preserved by Acts 10: 9 is that Peter went up to the housetop or terrace to pray at a time when the lunch was being got ready. Any place could, therefore, serve as place of prayer.

In ancient Israel it was a common practice to stand erect while praying to God.⁷ In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk 18: 9-14) both men appear standing erect, one at

6. A division of the night into three periods seems to be taken for granted in the Qumran texts (Ringgren, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*).

7. Zimmermann, *op. cit.*, p. 679.

the door and the other at the altar or in its vicinity. Going down on one's knees during prayer was also custom in ancient Israel. This usage was adopted by early Christians; thus Stephen fell on his knees (Acts 7: 60), and Paul knelt down and prayed with the elders of the Church (Acts 20: 36). Another gesture was the lifting up of hands (1 Tim 2: 8), and sometimes it was the custom to raise one's voice (Acts 4: 24). Raising of one's eyes to heaven is mentioned in the NT (Jn 11: 41; 17: 1. Cf. Mk 6: 41; 7: 34). Falling prostrate at times of distress (Mk 14: 35), uttering loud cries, and shedding tears (Heb 5: 7) were also gestures adopted by believers during prayer. Let us now go on to see to whom the first Christians addressed their prayers.

Prayer to Jesus the Lord

The primitive Church never separated Christ from God in the course of prayer. In other words she firmly believed in the divinity of Christ and addressed her prayers to him.⁸ The first believers sang his praises and glorified him as God, as is vouched for by the Roman writer Pliny.⁹ Stephen, the first martyr, while being stoned to death, prayed "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7: 59). The ardent prayer that the dying Saviour uttered on the Cross came to be addressed to him personally by the first Christians. According to Paul, "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom 10: 13). In this context the Lord is none other than Christ. Christians are those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and it is precisely this designation that the first writers of the Church use, whenever they refer to the believers (Rom 10: 13; 1 Cor 1: 2. Cf. Acts 9: 14). As the Israelites in Old Testament days called upon Yahweh, the Christian believers of the New Testament call upon Jesus, the risen and glorified Lord.

We find that Paul during the course of his life prayed to Jesus. When he was being harassed by a "thorn in the flesh"¹⁰

8. Prat, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

9. He writes that Christians used "carmen Christo quasi deo dicere" (Epist. X : 96:9).

10. The exact meaning of this expression is not known. It probably means some sort of illness that hindered him in his apostolic labours.

that always made him aware of his own weakness, he prayed three times to the Lord that it should leave him. And Christ gave him the following answer: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12: 8f).¹¹ It is important to note that the Apostle addressed his prayer not to God the Father but rather to Christ the Lord, for he knew very well that to pray to the *Kyrios* was to pray to God himself.

Prayer to God through Jesus

The originality of Christian prayer lies in the fact that it is mediated by Christ. It is this factor that distinguishes prayer in the Church from its antecedents in Judaea and its counterparts in Pharisaism. The prayer of the primitive Church sprang from her faith in Christ the risen and glorified Lord, and it was his Spirit that inspired her and prompted the first Christians to cry out, "Abba, Father" (Rom 8: 15; Gal 4: 6).¹² Under the influence of the Holy Spirit the early believers prayed to the Father in the name of Christ.

It is true that the primitive Christian community, as we have seen above, prayed directly to Christ, but it must be emphasized that the general practice was to address all prayers to the Father through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to note that the various technical terms for prayer are never used of prayers addressed to Jesus.¹³ Eph 5: 20 invites the readers to give thanks to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This means not simply that they should pronounce the name of the Saviour materially, but rather that they should pray in union with him: the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2: 5).

11. Cf. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, II (London, 1952), p. 128.

12. This exclamation presupposes the frequent use of the Lord's Prayer in the early Church.

13. The verbs in question here are *eucharistein*, "to give thanks," *proseuchesthai*, and *deisthai*, "to pray."

Our conclusion, then, is that Christ occupied the central place in the life of prayer of the early Church; in other words, the prayer of the first Christians had a pronouncedly Christological dimension. Inasmuch as the risen and glorified Jesus is the *Kyrios*, prayers can be addressed to him, but as he is at the same time the mediator between God and man any prayer to the Father must be uttered in his name. The originality of Christian prayer lies not in addressing God the Father but in addressing him "through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Nature of Prayer in the Early Church

We must first of all observe that there used to be public and private prayers in the primitive Church. The celebration of the Lord's Supper was the principal event of worship in the Christian community (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23-26), and this was, of course, a sacred action that demanded the presence of the body of the faithful. A discussion on the celebration of the Eucharist during the early decades of the Church is not possible here, but for our purpose it suffices to note that the believers sang the praises, during the Eucharistic assemblies, not only of God but also of Christ the Lord, and a few specimens of the hymns in which Christ is the central figure are preserved in the New Testament. The prologue to the fourth Gospel (1:1-18) is an old Christological hymn¹⁴ which was borrowed by the Evangelist: the description of Christ's pre-eminence over the universe and the Church (Col. 1:15-20), the account of His pre-existence, humiliation and glorification (Phil. 2:6-11), the celebration of the mystery of the Christian religion (1 Tim. 3:6), etc., were originally Christological hymns that used to be sung during public worship.

Paul asks the Roman Christians to glorify God with one mouth (Rom. 15:6). There are two things to be noted here: first, the believers come together in a particular place at a specified time (cf. 1 Cor. 11:17; 14:23); secondly, they engage in public

14. The clauses regarding the Baptist are the evangelist's own additions to the original hymn.

prayer. When they came together in this manner, they were expected to edify their fellow-believers by "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all their heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). We do not know what exactly was the nature of these songs, but we may rightly surmise that they were charismatic improvisations suggested by the Spirit during public worship. In support of this view we may cite Paul's remark that when the Corinthians come together "each one has a hymn" (1 Cor. 14:26). Since 1 Cor. 14 is concerned with charismatic gifts and their use, the hymn the Apostle has in mind must be some inspired song.

As is clear from 1 Cor. 14, the gatherings of Christians for prayer were marked by the manifestation of charisms such as glossolalia or speaking in tongues¹⁵, prophecy, etc.¹⁶ Paul wants the faithful not to be too anxious about these gifts. The community used to answer "Amen" during common prayers (1 Cor. 14:16). On these occasions not only the Old Testament but also early Christian writings used to be read aloud (Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27).

Private prayer was never neglected by the early Christians. Paul, for example, exhorts his readers to make known their petitions to God (Phil. 4:6). In his writings he takes care to request God that he may grant his readers the grace they need to be preserved from harm and to live their life faithfully. He also prays privately on several occasions: thus he says grace before meals on board a ship (Acts 27:35); he prays for deliverance from perils (Rom. 15:30-32) and also for the chance to undertake a trip to Rome (Rom. 1:9f). He asks husbands and wives to abstain occasionally from marital life so that they may

15. The gift of tongues actually means ecstatic prayer, prayer in a state of trance during which one utters ecstatic cries. There is no question of speaking in different languages, as is commonly supposed.

16. Cf. L. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of St Paul* (London, 1967), p. 256.

be able to give themselves up to intense prayer (1 Cor. 7:5). Finally he exhorts Christians to make their life a continuous prayer (1 Thes. 5:17. Cf. Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18). Private prayer, then, was as much in vogue in the primitive Christian community as public prayer.

From what has been said it is clear that petitions had a prominent place in prayer in the early Church.¹⁷ What did she pray for? She prayed for whatever she needed; e. g., the grace to proclaim aloud the message of salvation in spite of opposition (Acts 4:24-30). Petition included intercessory prayer. Christians are asked to pray for the ruler so that they may be able to lead a peaceful life (1 Tim. 2:8). At the time when 1 Tim. was written, Nero was the ruler of the Roman empire, and persecutions had already broken out. This historical situation makes the above admonition quite timely. As Cerfaux has pointed out, prayers of intercession for others were addressed to God, in the first instance, on behalf of the smaller or wider circle for which the believer was responsible: his family, his people, the state.¹⁸ Finally we must note that Jesus told his followers to offer up intercessory prayers for their enemies and persecutors (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:28), and the Church took this injunction in right earnest (Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12).

Praise of God and thanksgiving were much more prominent than the element of petition in the life of prayer of the primitive Church. In fact these remained the most salient features of prayer in apostolic and subapostolic times. The Epistles of the New Testament embody doxologies of varying length (Rom. 11:33-36; 16:25-27; 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20, etc.). These are all essentially praises of God. Many doxological fragments derived from the early Church are preserved here and there in Rev. (cf. 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, etc.). The Christological hymns referred to above are doxological in nature.

-
17. Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of St Paul* (London, 1962), p. 417. Detailed discussion in Spicq, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-69.
 18. Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of St Paul* (London, 1963), p. 114.

Gratitude to God permeated the entire life of prayer of the Church. "And be thankful" (Col. 3:15): this was an important exhortation, and expressed a basic attitude of the community of believers. The verb *eucharistein*, "to give thanks", is often used in the opening sections of several Epistles (Rom. 1:8; 14:6; 1 Cor. 1:14; 10:30; Phil. 1:3, etc.). There is evidence also of the use of the noun form *eucharistia* (1 Cor. 14:16; 2 Cor. 4:15; 9:11f; Eph. 5:4; Col. 2:7, etc.). In all these instances the one who is thanked is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From our discussions so far it is clear that prayer in the primitive community was quite rich and varied, and embodied all the elements that are met with in genuine Christian prayer.

Characteristics of Prayer in the Early Church

Early Christian prayer arose and developed under the impact of the Spirit of God. Paul throws much light on the part the Spirit has to play in Christian prayer. We have noted above that prayers were addressed to God through Christ. But what makes the believer pray through Christ, according to the Apostle, is the causality of the Spirit (Rom. 8:15). The work of the Spirit is to help man in his weakness, for man does not know how to pray, but the Spirit makes intercession for him with sighs too deep for words (Rom. 8:26). God has sent to the community of believers the Spirit who cries, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:16). Sonship is, then, at the bottom of every prayer that the Christian addresses to God.¹⁹ It is, therefore, the Spirit who prays in the believer (Rom. 8:26) and gives him the assurance that his hope will never prove futile (Rom. 5:5). In him the believer finds a new world in which he is sure of being heard.

The role the Spirit has to play comes to the fore when there is a question of charisms. Some of the believers had an exaggerated esteem for spectacular gifts, so much so that Paul had to intervene and warn them against causing confusion in the Church! He reminded them: "For God is not a God of confusion

19. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of St Paul*, p. 263.

but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33)! He also told them: "The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets" (1 Cor. 14:32). He exhorted them too, to strive after charity (1 Cor. 13), and finally made the remark: "All things should be done decently" (1 Cor. 14:40). However, there is also the injunction not to extinguish the working of charisms (1 Thes. 5:19).

The feeling of joy was another feature of the prayer of the first Christians. It had its inspiration in the conviction that they were sharers in the great salvation that God had effected in and through Christ. The Philippians are exhorted to rejoice in the Lord (3:1); they are repeatedly told: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (4:4). Paul tells the Thessalonians: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thes. 5:16-18). Incessant prayer and rejoicing, then, go hand in hand.

This joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). It is accompanied by love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22 f.). When there is a question of suffering, the thought of the bliss that awaits the believer increases the joy he experiences (Rom. 8:18. Cf. 5:2). Diligent prayer is, therefore, a source of joy for the Christian, for it is enlivened by hope which will never suffer disappointment (Rom. 5:5). The same thought is enunciated by Peter: "But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (1 Pet. 5:13).

Eschatological yearning was a further feature of prayer in the primitive Church. The first Christians were convinced that the Lord would come without delay (Phil. 4:5). They were longing for his second coming and the eschatological consummation of his work. This eagerness had its influence upon their prayer, which at times became a simple cry for the Lord's speedy return. The Aramaic-speaking community's prayer for the coming of Christ in glory is preserved in its original form by Paul: *Marana tha*²⁰, "Our Lord, come" (1 Cor. 16:22). The last book of the

20. Another way of understanding the prayer is, *Maran atha*, "Our Lord comes." But this is not at all a likely interpretation.

New Testament too embodies this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus". There is also the assurance of the Lord: "Surely I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:20). This prayer sums up the expectant attitude of the Church and her hope for the final return of the Lord. It is the cry of the Spirit in the liturgical assembly, which is also the prayer of every member of the Church.

Finally the prayer of the early Church was something continuous and uninterrupted. Men like Paul used to pray "day and night" (1 Thes. 3:10); they also used to remember their fellow-believer constantly in their prayers (2 Tim. 1:3). Widows are exhorted to continue "in supplications and prayers night and day" (1 Tim. 5:5). The activity of prayer was, therefore, something co-extensive with the living of her own life by the Church in all its fullness, and it was also closely connected with watchfulness (Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18. Cf. Rom. 1:12), for the Lord might come in glory at any moment. Uninterrupted prayer was, therefore, part of the eschatological hope of the Church.

This study of early Christian prayer is not exhaustive, but in spite of its limitations it has, it is hoped, brought into the fore-ground the consciousness of the Church of being a community gathered around the person of Christ and united by bonds of faith and love. Prayer serves as the most potent means of strengthening these bonds. Every Christian prayer is not only personal but a prayer of the Church, through which something happens in her. The Holy Spirit is the animating principle of prayer. The prayer of which he is the author is characterized by an insatiable yearning for the return of Christ and the final consummation. This type of prayer, which was the very principle of life in the early Church, should also manifest itself in the modern Church and permeate her entire life and activity. She will then become for every man a sign of hope.

The Term Prārthana: its Meaning

Though the Sanskrit word *prārthana*, "prayer,"¹ is now part and parcel of the vocabulary of Christians in India, its pre-history and exact signification are unfortunately not known to many of them. It is obvious that a proper understanding of its etymology and a close acquaintance with the meanings it had in ancient Indian tradition will give us a better insight into the theological significance of a term which, if we may say so, has fallen to the level of the banal and the commonplace. In this paper an endeavour is made to offer the reader a brief philological discussion of the word, with special emphasis on the data

-
1. The fact that the common word prayer is related to Sanskrit *prcch-*, "to ask," may come to many as a surprise. It is derived from the Indo-European (referred to as IE) root *prk'-* (cf. M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* II [Heidelberg, 1963], p. 329. J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* I [Bern, 1959], pp. 821 f.) which survives in Greek *theo-prop-os* (with change of *k'* to *p*), "asking the gods", in Latin *prec-es*, "prayers," in Gothic *fraih-nan*, and in Old High German *frāh-en* (modern German *fragen*), "to ask." In Latin too there is the verbal form *precari* (later form *precare*) which in its turn has given rise to Old Spanish *pregar*, Italian *pregare*, and Old French *preier* (modern French *prier*); prayer goes back immediately to the Old French noun *preiere*. By adding to the base *prk'-* the iterative suffix *-sk-* we obtain the form *prk'-sk-*, and with the addition of the suffix of the third person singular present, *prk'-sk-eti*, "he/she/it asks," which appears in Sanskrit as *prcchati*. The *-sk-* formation underlies Latin *poscō* (actually contracted from *porc-scō*), and Old High German *forskōt* (from *forh-skōt*), "asks for" (modern German *forscht*, "inquires into").

furnished by the RV; because of the limitations of space the other sections of Vedic literature will not be taken into account in our study².

I

Prārthana, actually a neuter noun, has a variety of meanings,³ among them the following: "entreaty, solicitation, desire or request for something, petition, suit, supplication, prayer" (in the conventional sense). The feminine form *prārthanā*⁴ too is to be met with in Sanskrit, with the meanings just listed. Some of the important derivative forms are worth educing: e. g. *prārthaka* which, when used as adjective means "soliciting, courting," and when used as noun, "the wooer, suitor." There is again the future passive participle *prārthanīya*, "to be wished, to be solicited, to be asked; desirable". Other participles that belong here are *prārthayitavya*, "desirable," and *prārthya*, "desired of, desirable". From among other forms we may cite the passive participle *prārthita*, "requested, solicited, desired, required, sought". As a neuter substantive it means "desire, wish". There

Incidentally the root under consideration is occasionally used in the *Ṛgveda* (referred to as RV). Cf. H. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda* (4th ed., Wiesbaden, 1964), cols. 852 f.

2. For a brief discussion on the idea of prayer in Vedic literature, cf. A. B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads I* (Delhi, 1970), pp. 310-12 ("The Forms of Prayer").
3. Fairly exhaustive discussions on *artha*, *arthana*, etc. may be found in A. V. Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (3rd ed., Delhi, 1965), and in M. Menier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (repr., Oxford, 1964). Quite brief and succinct entries (without reference to sources and examples) are available in A. A. Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* (repr., Oxford, 1958).
4. The ending *-ā* serves to create feminine forms; e. g., *bāla*, "boy," but *bālā*, "girl." On this, cf. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language* (2nd ed., London, 1965), p. 190.

is also the adjective *prārthin*, "wishing, desiring". Finally we may refer to *prāthayitr*, "suitor, lover."

Let us now analyse the word and study its component elements. Since many of the readers may not be quite familiar with the actual structure of words in IE languages, we add here a few remarks which will facilitate our work of analysis.⁵ We shall take as our model some of the forms of the Latin noun *dātor*, "giver" (nom.), viz. *dātorem* (acc.), *dātoris* (gen.), *dātori* (dat.), and *dātores* (nom./acc. pl.). The forms beginning with *dātorem* give us the case-endings *-em*, *-is*, *-i*, and *-es*, and since *dātor* is in the nominative case but without any distinctive termination, it is said to exhibit grade zero; hence, the sequence zero, *-em*, *-is* etc. When we turn to *dātor* itself we find that it is composed of the base *dā-* and the suffix *-tor* which occurs, for example, in *doc-tor*, *fac-tor*, etc. An IE noun is, then, made up, as a rule, of a root or base, a suffix, and a case-ending which may at times be zero.

We must note too in this connection that in IE a root can receive prefixes as well. This is borne out, for example, by nouns such as *ad-monition*, *ad-miration*, *inter-rogation*, etc. If we take at random the word *interrogator* and analyse it, we find that it is composed of the prefix *inter-*, the root *rog-*, and the suffix *-tor* which has the case-ending zero. The discussion here, it is hoped, will give the reader some idea of the nature of nouns in IE languages.

Reverting now to *prārthana*, we can say that it consists of the prefix *pra-*, the root *arth-* which is itself composed of the

5. For a brief discussion, cf. A. Meillet, *Introduction à l'étude comparative des langues indo-européennes* (Alabama Linguistic and Philological Series 3, Alabama, 1966), pp. 146-52. Here we must also make special mention of E. Benveniste, *Origines de la formation des noms en indo-européen* I (Paris, 1935). Exhaustive discussions are found in K. Brugmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen* II/1 (repr., Berlin, 1967); cf. too J. Wackernagel - A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II/1 (2nd ed., Göttingen, 1957).

base *ar-* and the extension *-th-* (this latter, as will be seen subsequently, is a complex phoneme consisting originally of three elements), and the suffix *-ana*; in other words the form under investigation is made up of several distinct elements which deserve to be closely studied.

First of all, *pra*⁶ is a preposition going back to IE *pro* which survives in Latin⁷ and Greek⁸ with the retention of the original vowel; compare the following English words which are all derived from Latin: *pro-bation*, *pro-bity*, *pro-claim*, *pro-consul*, *pro-create*, *pro-cure*, etc.; from Greek we may cite *problem*, *pro-boscis*, *pro-clitic*, *pro-drome*, *pro-gnosis*, etc. In all these examples, *pro-* means "forward, onward, on, in front of, before, at the head of," etc.⁹ In Greek, for example, it is used of time, place, and of other relations such as preference (e. g., rather than, more than), cause, motive (e. g., *pro-phoboi*-. "for fear"), etc. The same meanings are found in Latin as well.

Since IE *o* invariably becomes *a* in Indo-Iranian,¹⁰ we have in Sanskrit the form *pra*. As for its actual use,¹¹ we must note that it occurs with verbs and conveys the meanings "before, forward, onward, forth, on," etc.; e. g., *pra-harati*, "he strikes out," *pra-tiṣṭhate*, "he starts off," *pra-sthāpayati*, "he sends forth," *pra-vartate*, "he gets going, breaks out, rises," etc. It may also be coupled with nouns, and then the sense will be "fore-, great-" (in relationships); e. g., *pra-uḡa*, "fore-part of the shaft of a vehicle," *pra-kāśa*, "shining out," *pra-dhāna*, "that which is put forward," *pra-pitāmaha*, "great grandfather," *pra-pautra*, "great-grandson," etc. Finally it is also joined with ad-

6. Cf. Burrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 278, 285. The original base is *per*.

7. Latin *prae* (Old Latin *prī*, from IE *prei*) too belongs here.

8. Greek *parai* and *para* are also variants of the base under consideration.

9. Cf. Pokorny, *op. cit.*, pp. 813 f.

10. Compare, for example, Latin *dōnum* = Sanskrit *dānam*, Greek *domos*, Latin *domus* = Sanskrit *damah*, Latin *rōta* = Sanskrit *ratha*, etc. On this correspondence, cf. Meillet, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-100.

11. Detailed discussion is given in Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, 350-53.

jectives, and the sense then it yields is "very, exceedingly," etc.; e. g., *pra-jñāta*,¹² "well-known," *pra-bhāsurā*, "of great brilliance," *pra-purāṇa*, "long-kept, old," etc. In conclusion, *pra* in *prārthana* denotes some sort of forward or onward movement on man's part to God.

Let us now examine the suffix *-ana*.¹³ When the suffix under investigation becomes the bearer of the accent (i. e., *-anā*), it serves to form agent nouns (*nomina agentis*); e. g., *kar-anā*, "active", *kroś-anā* "shouting," *vac-anā* "speaking," *svap-anā* "sleeping" etc. There is in addition a series of neuter action nouns with the accent on the root; e. g. *kār-ana*, "deed," *vác-ana*, "word". Forms with this accent are also created from what Sanskrit grammarians have called verbs of the first class;¹⁴ e. g., *jáv-ana*, "hastening," *dyót-ana*, "shining", etc. As a neuter substantive (*pra-*) *árth-ana* is therefore an action noun.¹⁵

It now remains for us to examine the element *artha* which, as has already been pointed out, consists of the base *ar-* and the extension *-tha*.¹⁶ Sankrit *ar-* is derived from IE *er-*,¹⁷ which

-
12. The second element here is actually a passive participle.
 13. Cf. Burrow. *op. cit.*, pp. 150 f. Cf. too Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II/2 (Göttingen, 1954), pp. 180-206.
 14. In Sanskrit verbs are grouped into ten classes (which can all be divided into two conjugations); the first class, conventionally known as the *bhū*-class, adds *a* to the last letter of the root; thus *bhū* + *a* gives rise to the present stem *bhava-*, "to be".
 15. The feminine form *prārthanā* too is attested (on final *-ā*, cf. n. 4 above).
 16. Cf. A. Thumb - R. Hauschild, *Handbuch des Sanskrit* I/2 (Indogermanische Bibliothek - erste Reihe: Lehr- und Handbücher, 3rd ed., Heidelberg, 1959), § 255b (p. 42).
 17. Pokorny, *op. cit.*, pp. 326 - 32.

is an athematic¹⁸ root with terminative aspect and hence having the meaning "to set oneself in motion, to reach, to bring or lead to the top, to move (actively) downwards," etc. The basic idea conveyed by the root is, then, that of some sort of striving after, of making an endeavour to get hold of something.¹⁹

The extension *-th-* is also genuinely IE and is to be met with in the different languages of the family. In Avestan,²⁰ for example, we come across not only *artha*, "thing, opportunity, duty, obligation, lawsuit" but also forms such as *hamərəθa*,²¹ and from Sanskrit itself we may cite a number of examples: *gā-thā* (mas.), "song," *gā-thā* (fem.) "hymn, verse," *nī-tha*, "lord, master," *pra-tha*, "first," *gra-th-ana*, "connection, intricacy", *grān-tha* "knot, composition, verse, book, treatise," etc.

The origin of *-tha* has been clarified by recent investigations, according to which this extension is actually *t-H-a*.²² The phoneme *H* is a new factor that has been introduced into IE philology as a result of the discovery and decipherment of Hit-

18. In IE there is a distinction between thematic and athematic stems; in the case of the former a vowel is inserted between the base and the termination (e. g., Sanskrit *bhar-a-mah* = Greek *pher-o-men*; Latin *ag-i mus*, etc.), but in the case of the latter the ending is immediately added to the stem (e. g., Sanskrit *i mah* = Greek *i-men*, and Latin *i-mus*). Latest discussion in C. Watkins, *Indogermanische Grammatik*, III 1. *Geschichte der indogermanischen Verbalflexion* (Heidelberg, 1969), pp. 23 - 48.

19. Pokorny, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

20. That is, the language of the Zoroastrian scriptures, which is actually an eastern Iranian dialect spoken in the region of Chorasmia, and which is very close to Vedic, so much so that by mere phonetic substitution Avestan verses can be turned into good Sanskrit.

21. From *hamara* which corresponds to Sanskrit *samara*, "battle." It may be noted here that Indic *s* becomes *h* in Iranian, and hence *Sindhu* has become *Hindu* (from which is derived the usual form India).

22. Burrow, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

tite. In this IE language, which was in use in ancient Anatolia (= Asia Minor, modern Turkey) roughly between 1800 and 1200 B. C. and is remarkable for the preservation of several archaic features,²³ there appears a sound *h*²⁴ occurring in basic IE words, but in later languages of the family it is absent from these very same words. Here are a few examples:

- Hit. *hant-*, "front" = Sansk. *anti*, "in front of, near"; cf. also Greek *anti*, and Latin *ante*.
 „ *harki-*, "white" = Sansk. *arjuna*, "white"; Greek *argos*.
 „ *pahhur-*, "fire" = Greek *pur* (in English *pyre*).
 „ *newahh-*, "to renew" = Latin *novare* (compare Sansk. *navah*, "new").

Specialists in IE philology now use as a rule the conventional sign *H* as the equivalent of the new sound we have come to know from Hittite.²⁵

23. For a study of Hittite from the point of view of comparative IE. cf. H. Kronasser, *Vergleichende Laut- und Formenlehre des Hethitischen* (Sprachwissenschaftliche Studienbücher, Heidelberg, 1956). Cf. too E. Benveniste, *Hittite et indoeuropéens. Etudes comparatives* (Bibl. arch. et hist. de l'Inst. fran. d'Istanbul 5, Paris, 1962). On this work, cf. Mayrhofer, "Hethitisch und Indogermanisch. Gedanken zu einem neuen Buche," *Die Sprache* 10 (1964) pp. 174-97.
24. The orthography here has been simplified in order to facilitate printing. The sound represented by this sign is a laryngeal, the discovery of which has revolutionized our understanding of IE grammar; the "theory of laryngeals" is now commonly accepted by grammarians, though they differ among themselves in matters of detail. For a brief discussion with special reference to Sanskrit, cf. Burrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-88. The latest discussion (with reference to earlier literature) is in F. O. Lindman, *Einführung in die Laryngalthorie* (Sammlung Göschen, Berlin, 1970).
25. It may perhaps be of interest for the readers to know that the phoneme represented by *H* actually stands, in all likelihood, for three distinct sounds which in conventional transcription appear as *H*₁, *H*₂ and *H*₃ (other signs too are used at times. Cf. Lindman, *op. cit.*, pp. 105f.).

Coming back to Sanskrit we say that *H* survives in it in the form of aspiration, that is, *t-H-a > tha*. As examples we may cite *yaja-t-H-a > yajatha*, "worshipping," *śapa-t-H-a > śapatha*, "curse," *gā-t-H-a > gātha*, "worship," etc. The base *artha* is therefore, *ar-t-H-a*.

We shall now survey succinctly the principal meanings of *artha* in Sanskrit. Used as a noun in its own right it means "aim, object, purpose, errand; thing, matter, affair, cause, business; advantage, profit, wealth, property; aim, intent, meaning" (i. e., that which one strives for or after, that which one goes for). There are also idiomatic expressions such as *ayam arthah*, "this thing," *kam artham*, "what thing," and *ko 'artha*, "what is the use of" (with noun in the instrumental case), or "what does (noun in genitive) care for" (instrumental). Again *artham* and *arthe* occur at the end of compounds with the meaning "for the sake of, on account of, for;" e. g., *yajñasiddhyartham*, "for the accomplishment of the sacrifice" (literally, "in a manner having the accomplishment of the sacrifice as its object"), *damayantīartham*, "for Damayanti's sake" (literally, "with Damayanti as object"), etc.²⁶

Reference must also be made to the denominative verb *arthā-ya*,²⁷ "to endeavour, to strive for; ask someone (accusative/ablative) for (accusative); explain." It occurs too in conjunction with the prefixes *pra-*, "desire, to ask one (accusative) for something (accusative/locative), to request something (accusative) from someone (ablative) to woo, to have recourse to," etc., *abhi-*, "to ask someone for something" (accusative dative/locative), etc., and *sam-*, "to prepare, to consider, to connect with, to resolve, to cheer up," etc.

Our noun is used in combination with other nouns, adjectives, participles, etc.; e. g., *artha-kara* (adjective), "useful," *artha-citta* (adjective), "intent on riches," *artha-pati* (noun),

26. Cf. W. D. Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar* (repr., Cambridge, Mas., 1964), § 1302h (p. 507).

27. Whitney, *op. cit.*, § 1056. (p. 387).

“rich man, king,”²⁸ *artha-anīya* (future participle passive) “to be required/demanded from,” *artha-yukta* (passive participle), “significant,” etc. The following forms are well-known to all of us: *artha-vāda*, “explanation of purpose, praise,” *artha-śāstra*,²⁹ literally “science of *artha*,” *artha-ātman*, “true nature,” and *artha-abhiprāya*, “meaning intended”. These few instances of the use of our term, it is hoped, will give the reader some idea of the rich variety of meanings it has in Indian tradition. Let us now go back to the age of the first Veda and what the word meant to the sages of that period.

II

The RV attests the noun form *artha*³⁰ which in most texts is neuter in gender. The same work also preserves the denominative verb *arthāya-* (occurring only four times) and the adjective *arthin* (found seven times). The basic notion of *artha* is clear beyond doubt in the RV, viz. “that which is striven after”, and hence also “purpose, aim, objective, affair, undertaking,” etc. It is used particularly with the verbs *i*,³¹ “to go,” etc., and *gam*,³² “to go, to walk, to move,” etc., and the meaning in these instances is “to go on an errand, to carry on an undertaking,” etc. We shall now examine briefly some of the passages in which the forms cited here occur in order thus to acquire a comprehensive idea of what *artha* meant to the sages of the age of the RV.

There is a hymn in which the hero who, like Joseph in the OT (Gen. 37:22-24), has been thrown into a well by his

28. To Sanskrit *pati* correspond Latin *potis*, “powerful,” Greek *posis*, “husband,” and *potēs* in *des-potēs* actually *dems-potēs* whose equivalent in Sanskrit is *dem-pati* “lord of the house”), despot.”

29. Title of a well-known treatise on statecraft.

30. Grassmann, *op. cit.*, col. 114.

31. From the IE base *ei-* which survives in Latin *eō* contracted from *ei-ō*), Greek *eīmi*, etc.

32. From the IE base *gwem-* which is preserved in Latin *veniō* and its derivatives, in Greek *bainō* etc.

envious brothers.³³ He prays to the gods to come to his rescue, and it is said that those who have an *artha* in view attain it (of course, with the help of the gods). To illustrate the point the suppliant adduces the case of the bride who attains union with her husband (1,105,2).³⁴ From the context it is clear that the specific *artha* in question here is the hero's deliverance, the realization of which he compares to the bride's attainment of satisfaction through union with the bridegroom.

According to Vedic mythology one of the exploits of Indra was his freeing of the waters that were held captive by the demon *Vṛtra*.³⁵ Drawing inspiration from this myth the author of 1,130,5 describes how, after they have been liberated, the waters hasten to their common *artha*, viz. the ocean, which is also their husband.³⁶ The poet no doubt personifies the waters and represents them as rushing forward to their goal much in the same way as men tend in all haste to the goal or objective they have in view. The same idea of speeding to one's goal occurs in a hymn addressed to *Uṣas*, the Dawn, whom the poet likens to a wheel; like *cakra* she hastens to *artha* (3,61,3). It is also possible to run to *artha* like *aśva* (10,143,1).

While singing the praises of *Agni*, a sage refers to two beings who are of the same age and who try to drag towards them the wonderful shape of the god, and as they make this endeavour they progress towards a common *artha* (1,144,3). The two beings in question here are man's hands which, through

33. For a discussion cf. K. F. Geldner, *Der Rigveda* (3 vols., Harvard Oriental Series 33-35, Cambridge, Mas., 1951), I, p. 136.

34. On this stanza, cf. A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique d'après les hymnes du Rig-Veda* (repr., Paris, 1963), p. 239.

35. A detailed discussion of this demon and the myths associated with him is given in E. Benveniste-L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛthragna Etude de mythologie indo-européenne* (Paris, 1934), pp. 91-175 (the demon *Vṛtra* in Indian tradition). Cf. too H. Lüders, *varuṇa* I. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von L. Alsdorf Göttingen, 1951), pp. 167-201.

36. Geldner *op. cit.* p. 182.

rubbing, produce fire.³⁷ In another hymn in honour of the same god it is said that his fierce flames hasten to their *artha* like eagles and like the army of *maruts* or winds (4,6,10).

The RV also tells us that there can be *artha* which is really no *artha* at all and which, therefore, is false, as is clear from a poem that embodies, unlike the vast majority of hymns in the first Veda, a historical kernel:³⁸ the enemies of Sudas, the monarch who has Indra on his side, reached the wrong *artha* as though it were the right one (7,18,9). Our term can occur in contexts where there is question of the worshipper's wishes. Thus in a song celebrating Soma, the sacred intoxicating drink that formed an integral part of the cult of the Aryans, the poet says that worshippers come *dive dive*, "day after day," to the deified potion, to the same *artha*; he also adds: "To you, O juice, (come) our wishes" (10,1,5). *Artha*, then, is synonymous with all that the worshippers desire of their god.

Long life, a span of life stretching over a hundred autumns, may be included within the range of meaning of *artha*, as is vouched for by one of the burial songs in the RV. When the dead body is cremated, a stone is set up to mark the no man's land between the two worlds of the living and the dead, and the wish is expressed that no one from the former should come to this *artha*, i.e., the stone which is also thought of as a mountain that blocks death's way and thus assures man of long life (10,18,4).³⁹ In another poem too our term occurs in a context where the sage is dwelling upon death (10,27,20): though death and the waters tend to the same *artha*, the latter will not be overtaken by the former. The sense here is that the course of nature goes on, and death will never be able to put an end to it; it will run forward unhampered to its *artha*.

In this connection we may also refer to 10,29,5: as the sun-god drives his steed to the *artha* he has before him, Indra

37. Geldner, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

38. Geldner, *Der Rigveda* II, p. 194.

39. Geldner *Der Rigveda* III, p. 152.

should steer the worshipper over to the other bank, i.e., to the real *artha*. The religious sense of our term in this context is beyond all doubt: the true and supreme *artha*, according to the context, is prayer with all that it implies.⁴⁰

The meaning "intention" is clearly in evidence. A hymn in honour of Indra observes how when the offering of a sacrifice was mounting up to the place of the sacred act, the god took note of the devotee's *artha*, i.e., his intention in offering sacrifice (1,10,2). The sense "work, occupation," etc. is met with in a song extolling Soma: the priests whose task it is to carry on the cult of this god go about their *artha*, or in other words, their "job" as usual (8,79,5). The *artha* in question here is essentially a religious one, involving as it is the worship of a god.

Life here on earth, with all that it implies for men and animals, can simply be designated as *artha*. To this effect we read in the first stanza of 1, 124: when the morning fire is kindled in the hearth, the goddess Dawn makes her appearance, and the sun sends out his light; it is then that the god Savitr drives out *dvipads* (bipeds) and *catuspads* (quadrupeds) to their *artha*⁴¹.

Finally we must note that *artha* can mean the end of one's journey, one's destination. Thus a poet asks the *maruts* or winds what their destination is: are they, who journey in the heavens, going to wend their way to the earth (1, 38, 2)? A song in praise of Uṣas narrates how she awakens everybody: an individual is awakened so that he may exercise dominion, another so that he may seek after fame and honour, and a third, so that he may pursue his business as one goes to his destination, i. e., the *artha* of his journey (1, 113, 6). The meaning in these texts is

40. Geldner, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

41. It is important to note here that in the combination biped-quadruped we have a survival from the poetical language of the Indo-Europeans as it existed in the age of IE unity. The phrase under consideration occurs in other dialects as well (e. g., Latin, Umbrian, and Avestan). On the problem, cf. R Schmidt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1967, § 18 (pp. 12f.) and § 23 (pp. 16f.).

quite in keeping with the basic idea of our word, for the *terminus ad quem* is in all truth the good after which man invariably strives.

We shall bring our study of the noun *artha* to a close with a passing reference to 7, 63, 4, a text which is quite remarkable for beauty of thought and as such deserves to be cited in full:

“The golden gem of the sky, far-seeing rises,
whose goal is distant, speeding onward, shining.
Now may men, aroused by the Sun,
attain their goals and perform their labours.”⁴²

The sun is pictured here as *rukma*⁴³ a golden gem. The poet’s comparison is quite in keeping with the ideas the sages have of the sun; for example, they liken him to a multicoloured stone *madhye divo nihitah*, “set in the middle of the sky” (5, 47, 3). Still more remarkable is the following description: “Like a golden gem of the sky he has shone forth (*udita*)⁴⁴ at sunrise” (6, 51, 1). He is *dūrearthas*, one whose *artha* is located far away; that is, he has to travel a very long distance before he can set at the end of day. The poet now elicits the wish that men who have been awakened by the sun may attain their *arthāni* (neuter plural), the goals they are striving after.

At the beginning of this section it was pointed out that the RV employs a couple of times the verbal root *arthaya*; we shall now cast a cursory glance at the relevant passages which will certainly confirm what has so far been said about the sense of *artha*. A poem that addresses Indra as *maghavan*, the bounteous one, tells the god that if he wishes to make his worshippers happy he must act on their behalf himself (1, 82, 1). Man’s

42. A. A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader for Students* (6th impr., Madras, 1965), p. 127.

43. From the base *leuq-* (with the change of IE *l* to *r* in Sanskrit) which survives in Latin *lūx*, *lūcēre*, etc., in Greek *leukos*, “white,” and finally in English *light*.

44. Actually a past participle of the verb *i* (cf. n. 31 above) with the prefix *ud-* (*ut-*).

happiness, therefore, depends upon the god's gracious initiative, i. e., on his striving to make it actual and real. Another hymn to Indra requests him to grant the suppliants *dāna*-blessing,⁴⁵ for his stock of wealth is inexhaustible (2, 13, 13): man's obtaining of gifts from on high depends, then, on the godhead's action.

The basic idea of striving is no less clear in two other passages where again the verbal root *arthaya* is used by the poets. Aditi is the mother not only of the gods but also of the world at large. The raven that brought to earth the drink Soma which is able to inspire poets is also called Aditi⁴⁶, precisely for the role it plays in the creation of songs of praise, and they are both represented as trying to encounter each other (5, 44, 11). The next passage to be considered here is preserved in a song honouring the Aśvins⁴⁷: they strive after the same goal, namely, of measuring man's thoughts as a tailor measures clothes (10, 106, 1).

III

We are now at the end of our survey of the use of *artha* and *arthaya* in the first Veda, and though our examination of evidence has been quite limited in scope, it is nonetheless sufficient to highlight the basic factor in *artha*: it conveys above all the idea of a striving after some goal or objective. And interestingly enough, later Indian tradition has further evolved this idea, and the final term of this development is represented by the concepts of *paramārtha* and *puruṣārtha*. The former denotes the *parama*⁴⁸ or supreme *artha* a man can ever think of here on earth, which, according to philosophers, is "nothing less than the basic reality

45. As has already been noted (cf. n. 10 above) Sanskrit *danam* corresponds to Latin *donum*. The ancient Aryans yearned for *dāna* which, in the final RV analysis, is another form of *artha*), and there are, in the RV, poems which are *dānastutis*.

46. Geldner, *Der Rgveda* II, p. 49.

47. That is, horsemen; this is the name of the twin gods of dawn.

48. This form is actually a superlative which has a rich variety of meanings; literally it means "farthest, remotest, extreme, last," and thence also "highest, supreme, excellent, best," etc.

which underlies the phenomenal realm. This is apprehended when the mere impressions conveyed by the physical senses to a nervous brain in the service of the passions and emotions of an ego no longer delude."⁴⁹ In classical tradition *paramārtha* has a number of meanings: "highest, whole truth, true state of things, reality," etc. The person who has grasped *paramārtha* is called *paramārtha-vid*, that is, philosopher.⁵⁰

The concept of *puruṣārtha*⁵¹ is basic to Hindu tradition. In classical usage the word has meanings such as "human object, aim, goal of existence, action of man, human effort" etc., but from the point of view of the Hindu religious ideal it is the summing up of all the aims in life which can be reduced to four elements: *artha*, "material possessions,"⁵² *kāma*, "love,"⁵³ *dharma*, "righteousness,"⁵⁴ and *mokṣa*, "deliverance,"⁵⁵ The possession and fruition of these goods constitute *puruṣārtha*, man's *summum bonum*.

49. H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India* (Meridian Books, Cleveland, 1963), pp. 41 f.

50. Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

51. Cf. the interesting remarks of Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-42.

52. In Christian terminology *artha* will of course mean terrestrial realities which have a God-given part to play in the eschatological consummation of history. The petition, "Give us this day our daily bread" becomes, in the light of our observations, a request for *artha*.

53. In Indian tradition *kāma* is more often than not the equivalent of *erōs*, but when it is properly understood, it means love of one's neighbour which is inseparable from the love of God.

54. St Paul, particularly in his letter to the Romans, dwells at length on the righteousness brought into the world by our Lord.

55. The NT represents Christ's redemptive work as a deliverance.

In conclusion it may be said that the 'action' noun *prārthana* denotes a striving, on man's part, after an objective that may be styled *paramārtha*, the supreme *artha*, which as far as the Christian believer is concerned, is the God and Father whom Jesus has revealed to man. From the point of view of the Christian faith God alone is *puruṣārtha*, the highest *artha* for man, and *prārthana* is actually man's striving forward to gain possession of *puruṣārtha* which is in all truth *paramārtha*.

Calvary College

K. Luke

Trichur-4

Book Reviews

Some Publications of Interest to Indologists.

Jerzy Kurylowicz, *Indogermanische Grammatik* Bd. II: *Akzent. Ablaut* (Indo-germanische Bibliothek. I: Lehr- und Handbücher Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag; 1968), 371 pp. — Calvert Watkins, Bd. III: Erster Teil: *Eormenlehre. Geschichte der indogermanischen Verbalflexion* (ibid., 1969). 248 pp.

Those who intend to take up Indology seriously must have a good knowledge of Sanskrit, which, unfortunately, is at present impossible without some acquaintance with Indo-European (henceforth IE) philology. The Indologist has at his disposal Brugmann-Delbrück's monumental *Grundriss der vergleichenen Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen* (5 vols. in 9 parts; 2nd ed., Berlin, 1897-1916; repr., Berlin, 1967) and Hermann Hirt's *Indogermanische Grammatik* (7 vols., Heidelberg, 1972-37). These works are now somewhat out of date since they do not include the material furnished by Hittite and other Anatolian languages, and by Tocharian. This drawback is now being remedied, thanks to the new *Indogermanische Grammatic* (in 4 vols.) in the course of publication under the editorship of Jerzy (= George) Kurylowicz (pronounced Kurwovich), the great Polish Indo-Europeanist.

Vol. II by the editor discusses the system of accentuation and vowel gradation (also known as ablaut or apophony) in the IE languages. The first part (pp. 7-197) deals with the problem of accentuation at large, the morphological functions of the accent, and the accent systems of the individual languages. The second part (pp. 199-333) is concerned with vowel gradation which is intimately bound up with the system of accentuation. Readers may be familiar with formations such as *cit*, *cētana* and *caitanya*, but they may not be aware that the accent has a part to play in this type of word formation. The special laws of accentuation at work in forms of this type are discussed in detail by Kurylowicz. It may be noted here that he had published a massive

volume with the title *L'accentuation dans les langues indo-européennes* (Publications of the Polish Academy of Sciences, no. 17, Breslau, 1958).

The volume comes to an end with a recapitulation (pp. 334-8), an appendix (pp. 339-49) and a detailed index of words and morphemes (pp. 351-71).

The first part of vol. III deals with the problem of verbal inflection in IE. Athematic and thematic conjugations are dealt with in detail (pp. 23-58; 59-235). A most welcome feature of Watkins's work is the discussion on Hittite and Tocharian verbal systems (pp. 69-87; 198-209). A detailed index of forms is added to the volume.

The new *Indogermanische Grammatik* should be in the library of every Sanskrit scholar. Let us hope that the work will be completed very soon.

Rüdiger Schmidt, *Indogermanische Dichtersprache* (Wege der Forschung, Bd. 165, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgemeinschaft, 1968). 350 pp.

One of the principal conclusions arrived at by professional Indo-Europeanists is that there was, in the age of IE unity, a special poetical language which has actually, though in a fragmentary fashion, survived in the early poetry of the Aryans the Greeks and others. It is now more than a hundred years since work in this field commenced, and an excellent synthesis of the research done so far has been given by Schmidt in his *Dichtung and Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1967).

The book under review is a collection of articles on the various aspects of IE poetry. These studies appeared originally in different periodical and books, and most of them are anything but accessible to the average investigator. Among the authors whose contributions figure in this volume we may mention Kuhn, Darmasteter, Wackernagel, Schulze, Specht, Thieme, Meillet, Pisani, Schrader, Porzig.

The importance of the book lies in its contribution to Vedic exegesis. The first Veda particularly embodies numerous expressions that go back to the period of IE unity, and anyone

who wishes to delve deep into the poetry of the Vedic age (which, incidentally, can at times be most fascinating) must have at hand the volume edited by Schmidt. No student of the Vedas can do without this work.

Hermann Kulke, *Cidambaramāhātmya. Eine Untersuchung der religionsgeschichtlichen und historischen Hintergründe für die Entstehung der Tradition einer südindischer Tempelstadt* (Freiburger Beiträge zur Indologie, Bd. 5, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970). XVI-242 pp. With several plates and a chart.

We are quite familiar with all sorts of tales from the Hindu Purāṇas, and we are able to enumerate the principal Mahapurāṇas and Upapurāṇas, but many of us may not be aware that there is also a special type of Purāṇa known as Sthalapurāṇas, i. e., Purāṇas that celebrate the glories of sacred places. The work under review is a scientific study of a Sthalapurāṇa.

A special literary genre of Hindu India, the Purāṇas have always fascinated Indologists. The most penetrating studies on the nature, origin and significance of this type of literature are no doubt those of the German Indologist Willibald Kirfel. Further possibilities along the lines of Kirfel's researches are indicated by Paul Hacker, "Purāṇen und Geschichte des Hinduismus. Methodologische, programmatische und geistesgeschichtliche Bemerkungen," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 55 (1960) cols. 341-55.

How should we view the Purāṇas? They should be considered above all as a number of expressions of Hindu India's *Geistesgeschichte* i. e., the history of India's spiritual evolution. As a matter of fact, in the rear of even the most fantastic stories there are at work philosophical and theological preoccupations, which remain to be investigated in detail by historians. Furthermore, the Purāṇas are a veritable mosaic of heterogeneous material that originated at different times and in different places; and these too remain to be critically examined. Kulke's book is an investigation of this sort.

Cidambaram is a well-known town in Tamilnad and the legends about the temple (Śaivite) there are known as Cidambaramāhātmya. According to Kulke Śaivite legends of Cidambaram

originated during the period of the Pallava and Cōla Dynasties (600–1200 A. D.), but they were revised and rewritten under the impact of the Bhakti movement which was something essentially Vaiṣṇavite. In addition, since Cidambaram was never mentioned in the great Sanskrit works of antiquity, the priests of the town felt compelled to extol their traditions and incorporate them into the mainstream of the Sanskrit ones. These points are discussed in detail by Kulke, whose work, therefore, becomes a veritable historico-critical study of the *Geistesgeschichte* of a specific Dravidian group in South India. The book is a 'must' for those who are interested in Purāṇic research.

We bring this review to a close with a brief mention of some other important studies on the Purāṇas and their themes.

A. J. Gail, *Bhakti in Bhagavatapurāṇa. Religionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Inde der Gottesliebe in Kult und Mstik des Viṣṇuismus* (Münchener indologische Studien, Bd. 6, Wiesbaden 1969).

A. Hohenberger *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (Münch. ind. Studien, Bd. 5, ibid., 1967).

W. Kirfel, *Das Purāṇa von Weltgebäude. Die kosmographische Traktate der Purāṇa's. Versuch einer Textgeschichte* (Bonner orientalistische Studien, N. S. 1, Bonn, 1954).

Id., *zur Eschatologie von Welt und Leben. Ein purāṇischer Text nebst Übertragung in textgeschichtlicher Darstellung* (Bonn. orient. Studien, N. S. 8, Bonn, 1960).

G. C. Tripathi, *Der Ursprung und die Entwicklung der Vāmana-Legende in der indischen Liicaturen* (Freiburger Beiträge zur Indologie, Bd. 1, Wiesbaden, 1968).

Special mention must be made here of a study of the Prahlāda stories, which are so touching and remarkable for the element of Bhakti, viz., Paul Hacker, *Prahlāda, Wesen und Wandlungen einer Idealgestalt* (Abhandlungen der Akademie, Mainz, geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse, 1959, Nr. 13). The reader may be surprised to hear that Hacker refers to 16 different versions of the Prahlāda story in Purāṇic lore! The reviewer's advice to teachers of Indology in our seminaries who happen to go through these pages is *tolle et lege*.

Contributors

FR K LUKE, O. F. M. Cap. is Professor of Scripture and Oriental Science at Calvary College, Trichur-4. He holds a Licentiate in Theology from the Gregorian University, Rome, a Licentiate in Scripture from the Biblical Institute, Rome, and a Doctorate in Semitics from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He has published a number of articles, both popular and scientific.

Fr JOSEPH KOTTACKAL did his studies in Rome and holds a Doctorate in Theology from the Gregorian University and a Licentiate in Scripture from the Biblical Institute. He teaches Scripture and Theology at the St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam and is a member of the Committee for the Malayalam Translation of the Bible.

FR LUCIEN LEGRAND belongs to Paris Foreign Mission Society and is Professor of S. Scripture at St Peter's Seminary, Bangalore. He did his studies in Paris, Rome and Jerusalem, and holds a Licentiate in Sacred Scripture. He has contributed articles to periodicals in French and English; and is actively engaged in the Tamil Bible Project. His book: *The Biblical Doctrine of Virginity* was published by Chapman, London, 1963.

FR CHERIAN M. CURIYICAD, S. J. teaches H. Scripture at Vidya Jyoti, Institute of Religious Studies, which is the new name of St Mary's College, recently transferred from Kurseong to Delhi (Civil Lines, Delhi-6). He studied at the Biblical Institute in Rome and in Jerusalem, gaining a Licentiate, having previously qualified in English literature. He has published articles in various theological and ascetico-spiritual periodicals.

FR MATHEW VELLANICKAL is Professor of Sacred Scripture and Dean of Studies at St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam. He studied at the Propaganda University, Rome, and the Catholic University of Wurzburg, Germany. He holds a Licentiate in Theology and a Doctorate in Scripture.

FR THOMAS JACOB, O. F. M. Cap. did his studies at the Poona Athenaeum and teaches at Calvary College, Trichur-4. He holds a licentiate in theology and is interested in biblical science.

**Statement about Ownership and other Particulars
about Jeevadhara**

(Form IV — see Rule 8)

1. Place of Publication : Alleppey.
2. Periodicity of its Publication : Bi-monthly.
3. Printer's Name : Fr Modestus, C. M. I.
Nationality : Indian
Address : St Joseph's Press,
Mannanam.
4. Publisher's Name : Fr Constantine Manalel, C. M. I.
Nationality : Indian
Address : Theology Centre,
Alleppey.
5. Editor's Name : Fr Constantine Manalel, C. M. I.
Nationality : Indian
: Theology Centre,
Alleppey.
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the Newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital: Fr Constantine Manalel, C. M. I., Theology Centre, Alleppey.

I, Constantine Manalel, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd)
Publisher.

Printed at St Joseph's Press, Mannanam
and Published at Theology Centre, Alleppey
by Constantine Manalel.